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PC PowerPlay

THE AUSTRALIAN
PC ENTERTAINMENT MAGAZINE

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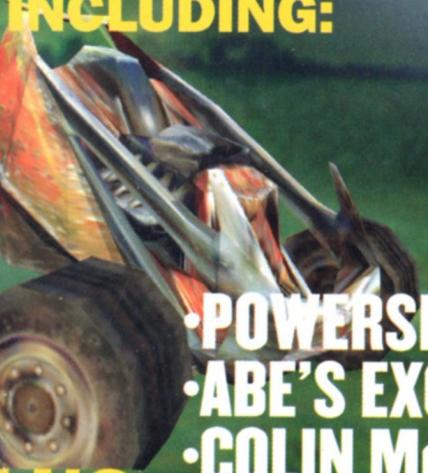


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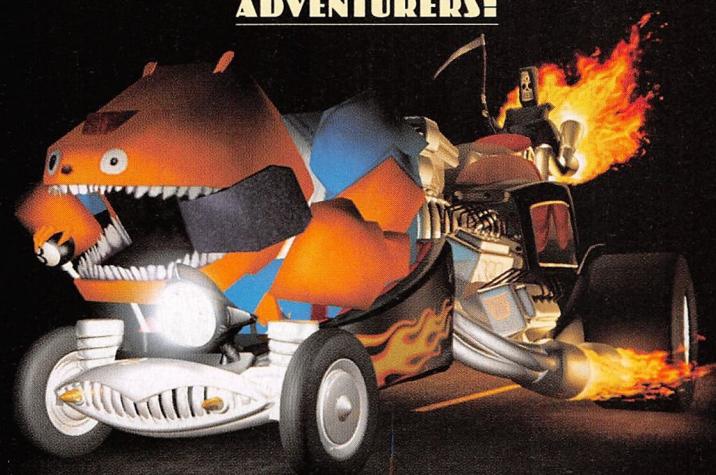
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— Unified Gamers Online

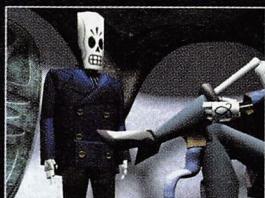
"...an Art-Deco epic that will have adventure gamers jumping for joy."

— PC Gamer

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— Computer Gaming World

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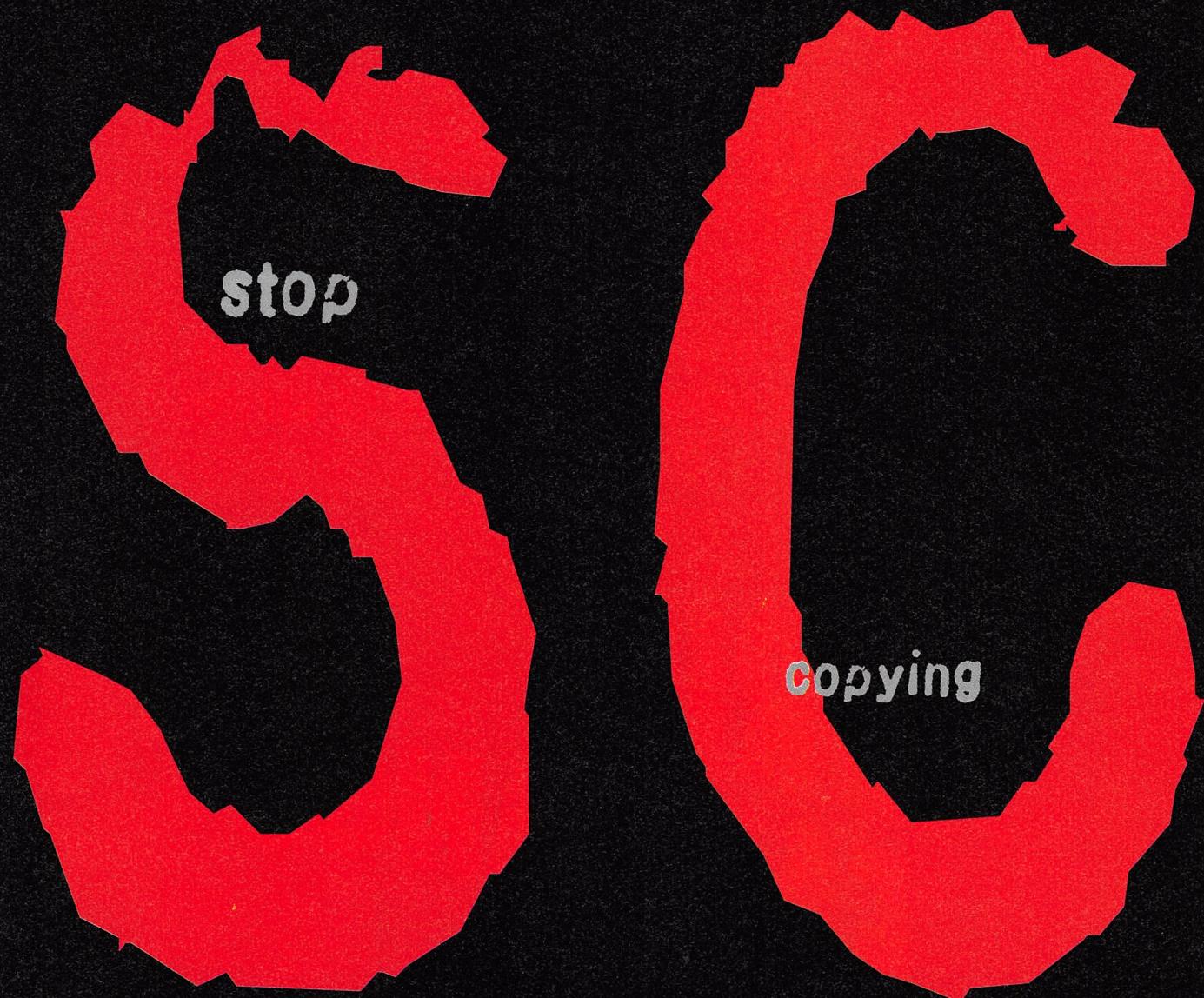
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All copyrights reserved by
Next Publishing Pty Ltd
ACN No 002 645 645
Printed by Wilke Colour
Film produced by Prestige Colour
Distributed by NDD 02 9353 9911
ISSN: PCPP 1326-5644

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We love you all, BUT:
There are a few PCPP readers out there feeling rejected and unloved. This is because various members of the PCPP crew at one time or rejected their request to join our personal ICQ lists. It's not because we're arrogant elitist pricks, but simply because we each get several ICQ requests EVERY DAY and it'd all get completely out of hand. There, so don't feel bad if we reject your authorisation request, we still love you!
Email us instead!

Regulation Xmas Editorial #3



Another year behind us, ho ho ho, let's look at the year that was, shall we?

Let's not. That would be premature. The 'Games Year' runs from about October through till the following March - as you've probably noticed. Right now we're in the thick of it. What to play! It's a rich season for gamers. As I stare at the mounting piles of games begging "play me!" I give up again on another Xmas of outdoor life. There's just too much! That said, all I've been playing for the last couple of months is Grand Prix Legends. I can't get over how good this sim is. Sure, it takes a good week to be able to put together a couple of spin-free hot laps, but there's the beauty. A time comes in Grand Prix Legends where it all 'clicks' and you suddenly know what's going on. That's far from the end of the game's value, though, for there begins a journey of perfecting the laps, tuning the car setup and learning the intricacies of the game.

It's a brave move for developers Papyrus to bring out such a demanding game. Some reviewers panned it, simply because they didn't give it the time to reveal its inner beauty.

Some gamers returned the game for the same reason. Most game developers are aware of this syndrome and work hard to make games that make sense from the outset, allow you to reach 'unbeatable' status in but a couple of days, or less. Then it's all over in a week, with you left with a game that has

nothing more to offer. Go see a movie every night of the week instead, it's much better value for your entertainment dollars!

Grand Prix Legends has rekindled, for me, an excitement I truly haven't felt since I was out there, where you are now, not in the games biz, but a gamer who got a solid year's play out of Grand Prix from MicroProse. Other favourites of that era were Civilization and Falcon 3.0 (all MicroProse games, coincidentally, but then they were the untouchable masters). They all had amazing depth and had a year or two worth of play in each.

More of that please. Big, epic mothers of games that last forever, so we don't have to waste time and money playing 'instant-fix' crap. That's all. Have a happy.

**Ben Mansill
Editor**



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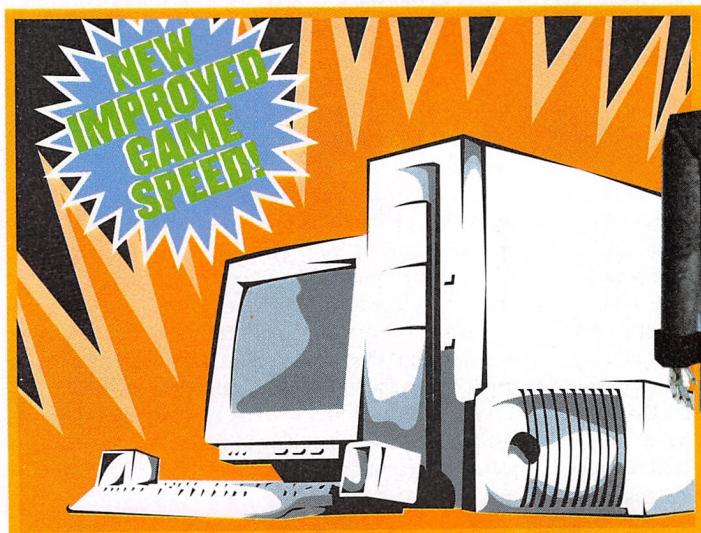
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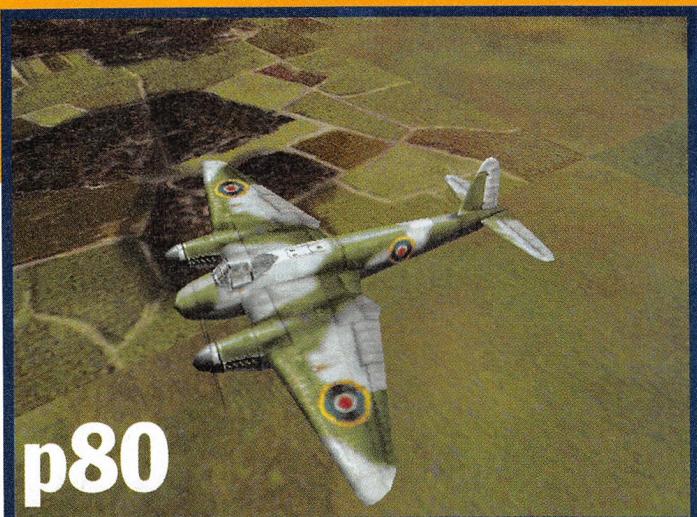
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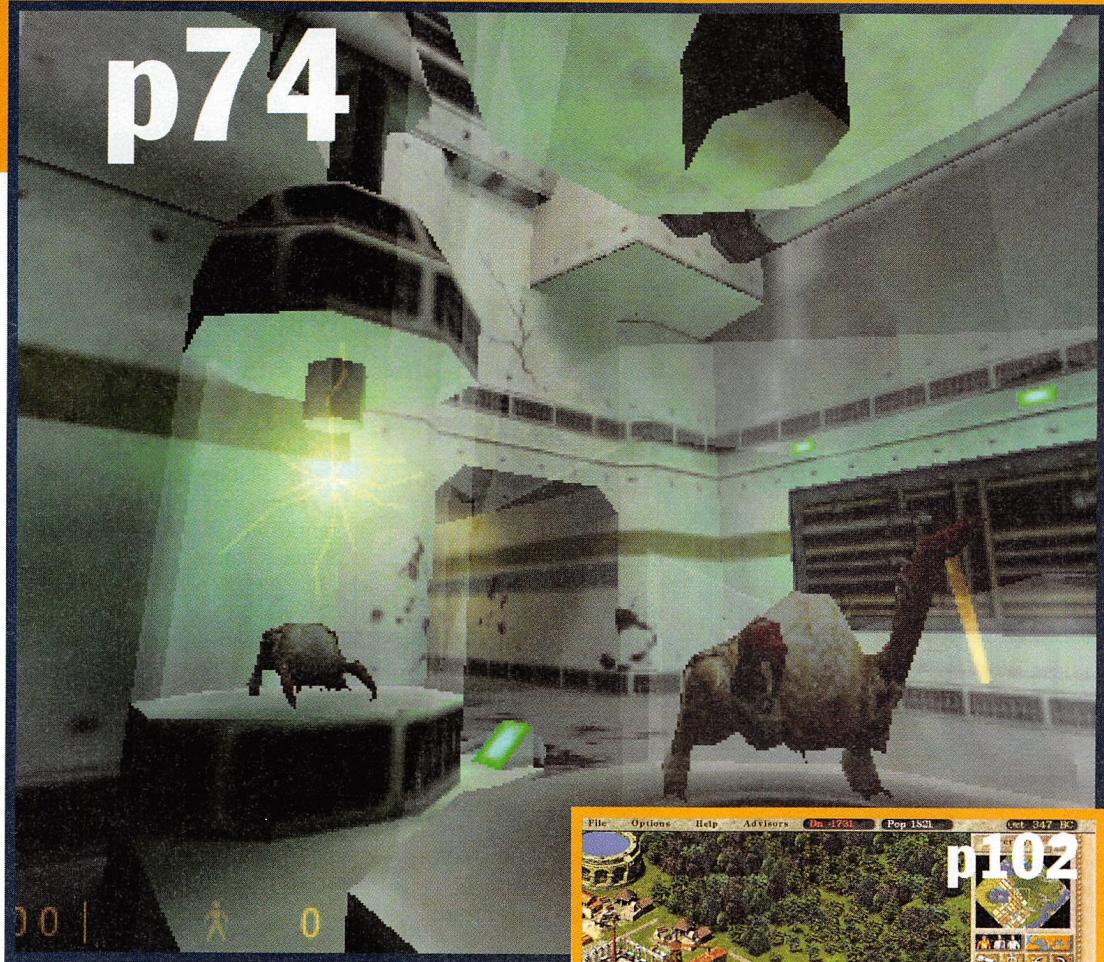
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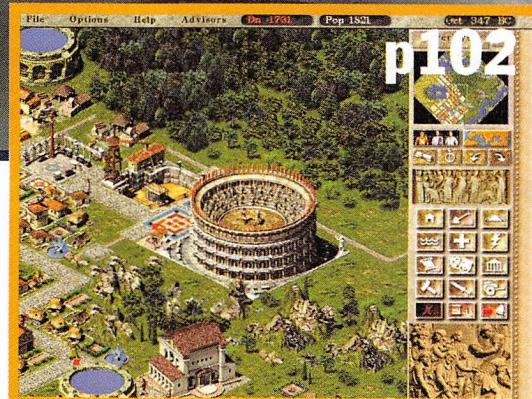
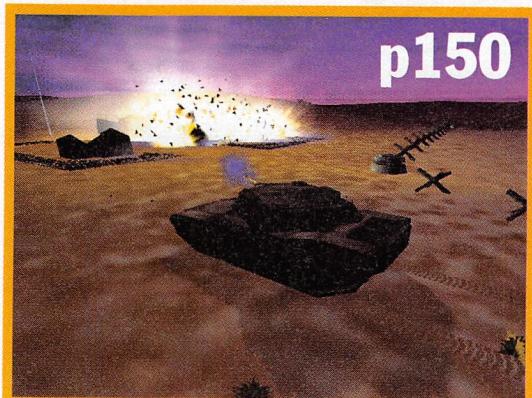
Win cool big free stuff that'll impress your friends.

Flashback**162**

Mr Do. He did and we loved him for it.

WHERE IS ED?

**ONLY ED CAN
SAVE ME FROM
THIS MAYHEM!**

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CD GUIDE

Lovingly compiled just for you

CD #31

Starting the PC PowerPlay CD

This month's CD is jam packed with the latest demos. Simply insert the CD into your CD-ROM drive and it should automatically come up with the CD interface. [If not don't panic, all you need to do is change to the \PCPP directory and double click on the PCPP.EXE file]

Once the menu is up click on GAMES, UTILS or PATCHES to access those menus. Select the program you want to test drive and it will either install to your hard drive or run straight off the CD. More options are available on the CD and they are pretty straightforward.

cdtech@powerplay.next.com.au

Faulty CDs will be replaced free of charge. Send it, together with a description of the error, to:

PC PowerPlay CD Returns

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The Games

Bass Masters Classic

THQ

Sports

\GAMES\BASS\SETUP.EXE

The first and only 3D fishing game available for the PC, Based on one of the most prestigious bass fishing tournaments in the world. Learn to become a better fisherman - weather permitting or not!

Keyboard Commands:

UP ARROW - powers the trolling motor forward

DOWN ARROW - powers the trolling motor in reverse

LEFT ARROW - turns the trolling motor left

RIGHT ARROW - turns the trolling motor right

SHIFT Key - gives greater acceleration to the troll motor

V Key - changes the camera position around the boat

PLUS Key - tightens drag

MINUS Key - loosens drag

U Key - goes to Underwater Mode

S Key - stops the boat (if trolling)

W Key - Toggles Lake Conditions Window

C Key - Cut line during fish fight

1-7 Keys - switch between the current fishing rod/lure being used Requirements

Minimum: Pentium 133, 16 MB, SVGA

Recommended: Pentium 200, 32 MB, SVGA 2MB

Dominant Species

Red Storm

Realtime Strategy

\GAMES\DS\SETUP.EXE

You are a young Mindlord, set to control your minions in the harvesting of Anima. You must protect your planet against the invading humans who want to steal your animal! Protect them at all costs.

Requirements

Minimum: Pentium 200, 32 MB, SVGA optional

Recommended: Pentium 233, 32 MB, SVGA 2MB, Yes



Powerslide

Powerslide

GT Interactive

Driving Simulator

\GAMES\POWER\SETUP.EXE

The year is 2020. After an environmental holocaust of devastating proportions, the population hovers slightly above the zero mark. The rich have fled to the underground, where they have formed corporate enclaves. Above ground the desolate cities and desert wastelands are inhabited by a feral population of freaks and survivors. With 98% of the population dead there's a lot of cars around just waiting to get driven into the ground. The ferals started the Powersliding competition, the corporates banned it. It's dangerous, it's illegal, it kicks butt.

Requirements

Minimum: Pentium 166, 32 MB, SVGA

Recommended: Pentium 233, 32 MB, SVGA 2MB, 3D Card

Fifth Element

Kalisto Entertainment
Action
\GAMES\FIFTH\FIFTH_PC.EXE

Based on the film of the same name, The Fifth Element puts you in control of either Corben or Leeloo, exploring levels, solving puzzles and collecting elements to save the world from impending doom.

Requirements

Minimum: Pentium 133, 16 MB, SVGA

Recommended: Pentium 166, 32 MB, SVGA 2MB

Jagged Alliance 2

Sir Tech
Strategy
\GAMES\JA2\SETUP.EXE

Strap on your M16 and enter Jagged Alliance 2, the game that takes the award-winning series to new levels with an unprecedented and addictive blend of role-playing, strategy and tactical combat.

Requirements

Minimum: Pentium 133, 16 MB, SVGA

Recommended: Pentium 166, 32 MB, SVGA 2MB

NASCAR Pinball

Sierra
Pinball
\GAMES\PINBALL\nascar.EXE

Race side-by-side with some of the greatest drivers in the world as you put the pedal to the metal in this action-packed pinball experience. The only pinball game officially approved by NASCAR.

Requirements

Minimum: Pentium 90, 16 MB, SVGA

Recommended: Pentium 166, 32 MB, SVGA 2MB

Populous: The Beginning

Electronic Arts
Realtime Strategy
\GAMES\POP\SETUP.EXE

The world is your oyster. Create and train warriors, preachers and fire warriors. Annihilate your enemy and make them all worship you with your new God complex.



Oddworld : Abe's Exoddus

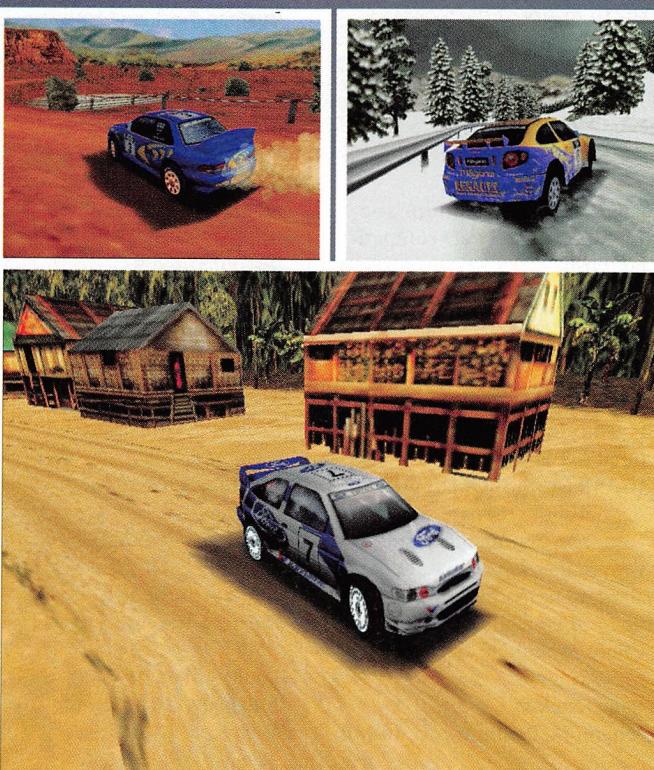
GT Interactive
Platform
\GAMES\ABE\SETUP.EXE

Abe is back and in big trouble again, in the all new Oddworld adventure. Once again, it's up to our skinny loin-clothed friend to save the day - unless he can rescue the Mudokons, they'll be tortured forever!

Requirements

Minimum: Pentium 120, 16 MB, SVGA

Recommended: Pentium 166, 32 MB, SVGA 2MB



Colin McRae Rally

Codemasters
Driving Sim
\GAMES\RALLY\SETUP.EXE

A Colin McRae Rally championship covers a whole season of rallying in three different countries with varying weather conditions and time of day. The demo contains no computer opponents.

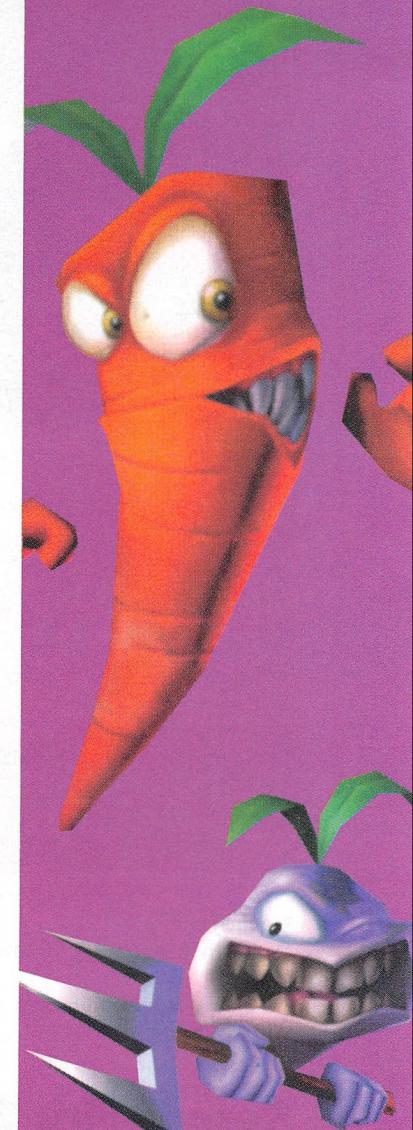
Requirements

Minimum: Pentium 133, 16 MB, SVGA,

3D Card

Recommended: Pentium 200, 32 MB, SVGA 2MB, 3D Card

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DETHKARZ

Melbourne House
Driving Simulation
|GAMES\DEATH\SETUP.EXE

Set in the 25th century, the Dethkarz are fusion-powered, fast and loaded to the teeth with plasma artillery. The racing is intense, the handling realistic and the combat gritty. See how long you can last...

Requirements

Minimum: Pentium 166, 16MB, SVGA, 3D Card

Recommended: Pentium 200 MMX, 32MB, SVGA 2MB, 3D Card

Requirements

Minimum: Pentium 133, 16 MB, SVGA

Recommended: Pentium 200, 32 MB, SVGA 2MB

Return Fire 2

Ripcord Games

Realtime Strategy

|GAMES\RETURN\SETUP.EXE

Enemy strike teams are preparing an assault. They will attack you in the air, by land, by sea or via the Internet. Your mission: Infiltrate the enemy's bases, locate the hidden flag and return to your base unharmed.

Requirements

Minimum: Pentium 133, 16MB, SVGA

Driving Controls

STEER LEFT - Left Arrow
STEER RIGHT - Right Arrow
ACCELERATE - Up Arrow
BRAKE - Down Arrow
FIRE GUN - Shift
CHARGE GUN - Hold Shift
DEPLOY POWERUP - Z
GEAR UP - Q
GEAR DOWN - A
CHANGE VIEW - TAB
REAR VIEW - Ctrl
PAUSE - ESC

Recommended: Pentium 200, 32, SVGA, Direct 3D compatible card

Small Soldiers

Hasbro Interactive

Realtime Strategy

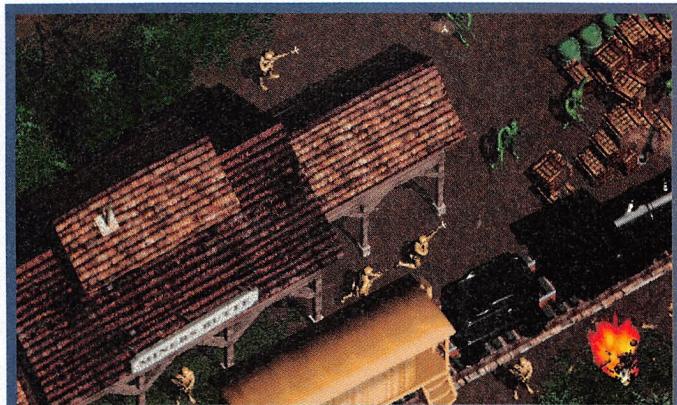
|GAMES\SS\SSOLDIER.EXE

Action-figure toys are running wild. The Commandos and Gorgonites: sworn enemies are about to face-off in an all out battle for the neighbourhood! Choose your side and prepare for War.

Requirements

Minimum: Pentium 100, 16 MB, SVGA

Recommended: Pentium 166, 32 MB, SVGA 2MB



ARMY MEN

3DO

Real Time Strategy

|GAMES\ARMMEN\SETUP.EXE

Army Men brings to life the plastic military units we all played with as kids. Melt 'em, shoot 'em, and blow them up; just like you did back then... But be careful - this time, they shoot back.

Controls

Sarge and Vehicle controls

Basic Movement and Firing

Numpad 8 = Move Forward, get up from kneel and prone.

Numpad 2 = Move Back

Numpad 4 = Turn Left

Numpad 6 = Turn Right

Space Bar or left click = Fire (Hold down to aim, release to fire, except auto rifle and flame thrower)

Weapons/Items

F8 or D = Drop Current Selected Weapon

Keyboard 1 = Select first weapon
Keyboard 2 = Select second weapon

Keyboard 3 = Select third weapon or item

Right Click = Toggles through weapons

Additional Vehicle Controls

F4 or E = Enter / Exit Vehicle

Z = Turn Turret Left

X = Turn Turret Right

Shift = Half Speed

Additional Sarge Controls.

Numpad 5 = Go down to kneel and prone

Numpad 7 = Roll Left

Numpad 9 = Roll Right

Numpad / = Dive

Shift = Walk

Scroll Mode

Enter = Scroll map and brings up free floating cursor

Enter = Return to Sarge Controls.

Left click on dash map = Transfers view to location

Ordering Squads

Tab = Toggle through squads

F1 = Order squad to Follow

F2 = Puts squad on Attack.

Scroll map and press 'space Bar' or left click to place

F3 = Puts squad on Defend.

Scroll map and press 'space Bar' or left click to place

F9 = Command squad to Attack Now at their current location

F10 = Command squad to Defend Now at their current location

Enter = Return to Sarge control without giving order

Air Support

F5 = Scroll Map and press Space Bar or left click to place Air Strike

F6 = Scroll Map and press Space Bar or left click to place Paratroop Drop

F7 = Air Reconnaissance

F11 = Recall Mission and pause game

F12 = Bring up map

Esc = Options window and pause game

Requirements

Minimum: Pentium 90, 16 MB, SVGA

Recommended: Pentium 133, 32 MB, SVGA 2MB



GET MEDIEVAL

Monolith

RPG

|GAMES\GMED\GMDEMO.EXE

Get Medieval immerses you in a frenetic action environment as you battle the evil minions of a dastardly dragon. Remember Gauntlet? This is the 90's version. Get mad, get even, GET MEDIEVAL!

Requirements

Minimum: Pentium 90, 16 MB, SVGA

Recommended: Pentium 166, 32 MB, SVGA 2MB

Utilities

Audioactive Production Studios

This cool program lets you convert all your WAV files into high quality MP3 files.

Acdsee 2.23

Acdsee is the fastest and most powerful graphics viewer around. A must have graphics utility.

Cakewalk

Cakewalk is the award-winning product for recording, editing, and playing music & sound on the desktop.

LifeSaver

A configuration file backup and restore utility which can be used to recover from problems due to corrupt configuration files.

Neverforget

Easy to use scheduling and reminder software that allows you to organise all of the important dates, appointments, and occasions in your life.

Paintshop 5.01

One of the best graphics programs available if you're interested in editing images. Almost as good as PhotoShop but much cheaper.

Photoshop 5.0

Testdrive the most advanced and popular photo imaging software available. If you want to get into graphics this is the best program around

Turbo Browser 98

A superior file-management replacement that mimics the Explorer interface but adds extensive functionality.

Ulead COOL 3D

Turn any TrueType font into an animated, 3D masterpiece instantly.

Winzip 7.0

The latest release of Winzip serves up several new features that make the program even easier to use for managing archives.

WebGraphics Optimiser

A perfect tool for optimising and compressing images for online and Internet use, mainly World Wide Web pages.

MEET ED THE
SPACE SHAKER!



Internet

ICQ

Would you like to know if your friends & associates are surfing the net? With ICQ you can chat, send messages and files, play games and more

Mirc

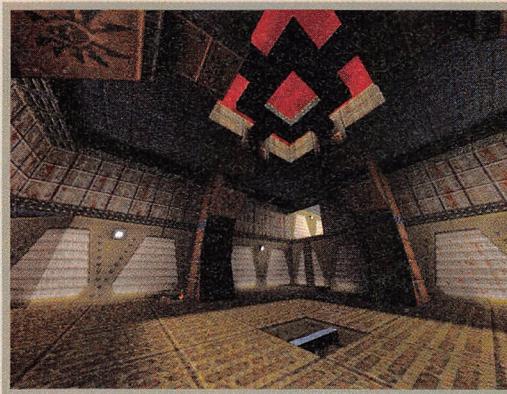
Mirc offers a world-wide multi-user chat network, where people meet to talk in groups, or privately.

Netscape 4.07

The latest version of the world's best browser. Much more stable than the last version

PATCHES

No "real" patches this month but we do have some killer Quake deathmatch levels created by two of our own Next media Quake fanatics; Andrew Humphreys [Rolling Stone Editor] and Dan Toose [Hyper Editor]. These boys almost literally live and breathe Quake, and they've proved that they're a dab hand at creating maps as well. Also, as an added bonus there's a few South Park levels too, from Scoots - yes, the South Park mod wasn't dead in the water after all. Rejoice!



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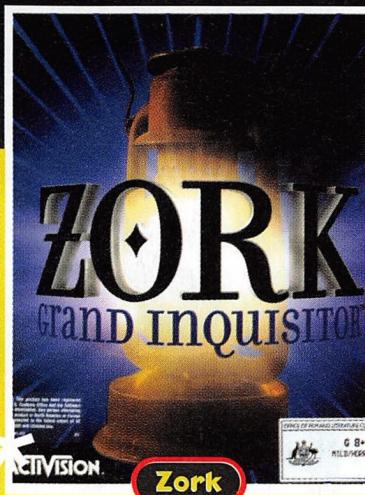
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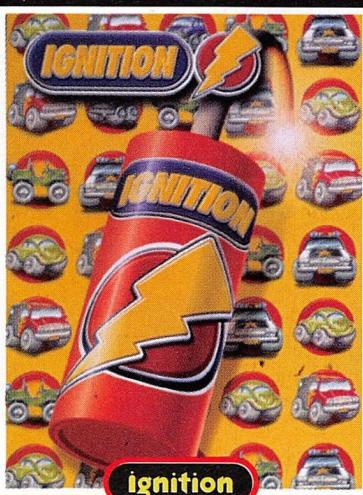


Telstra Big Pond

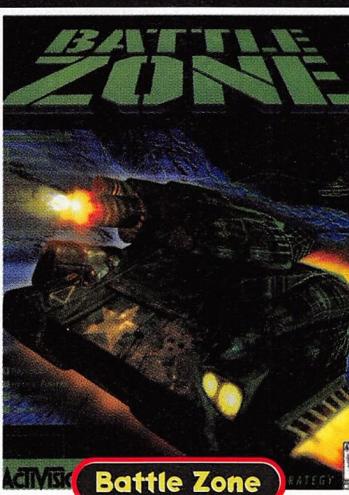
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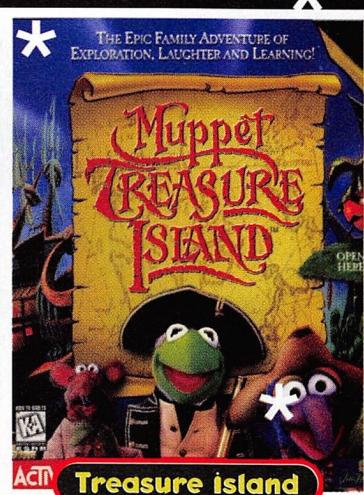
Zork



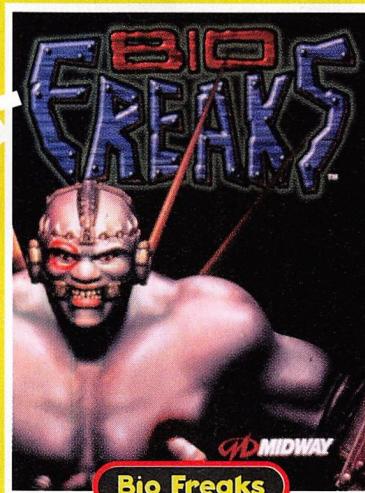
Ignition



Battle Zone



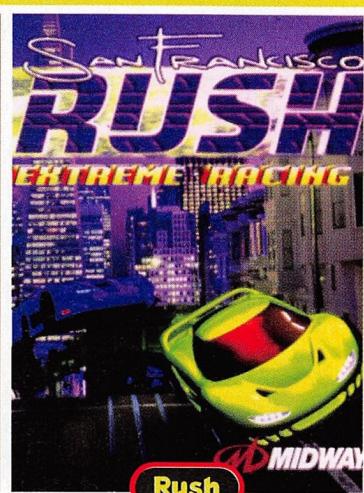
Treasure Island



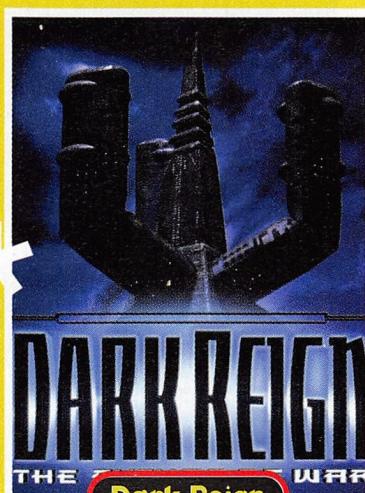
Bio Freaks



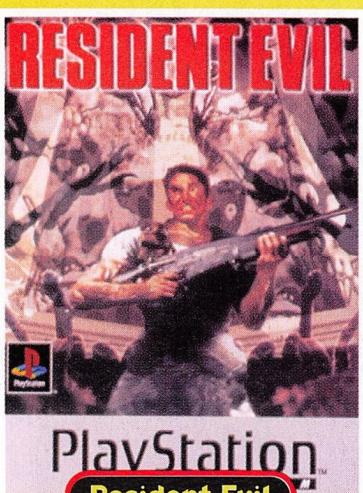
Mech Warrior 2



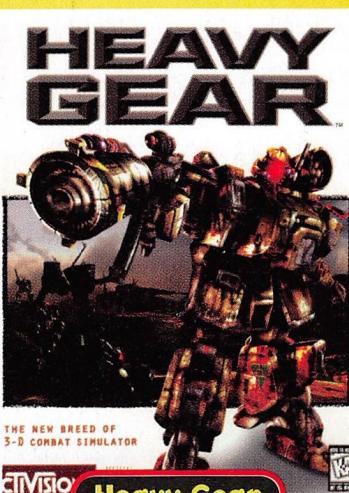
Rush



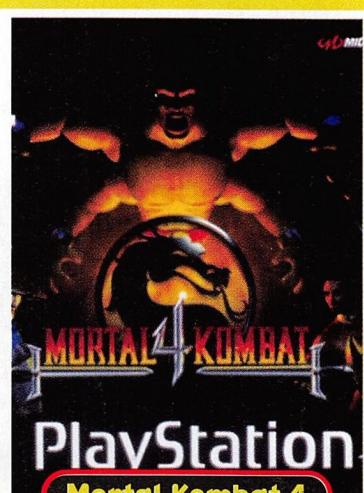
Dark Reign



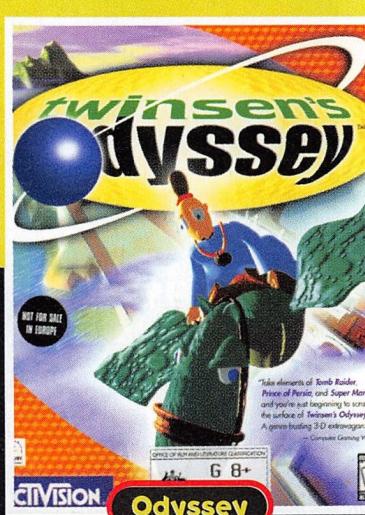
Resident Evil



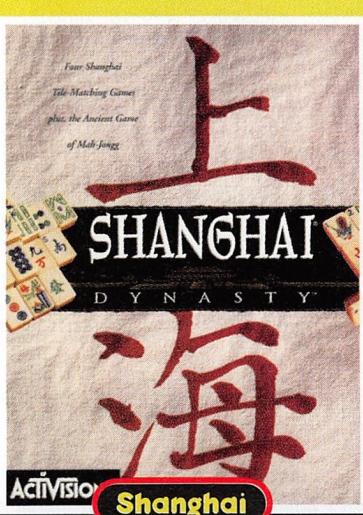
Heavy Gear



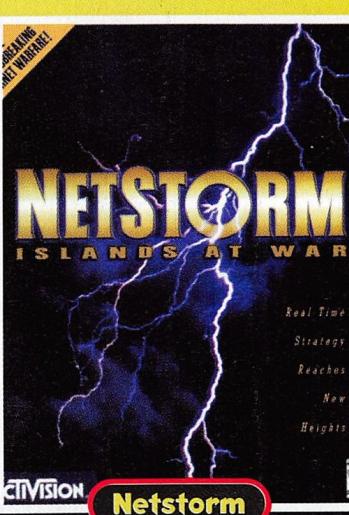
Mortal Kombat 4



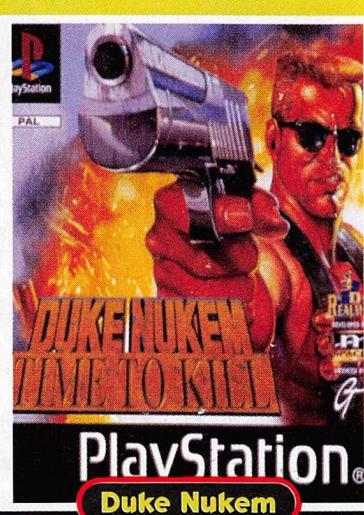
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Question: How many bytes in a bit? _____

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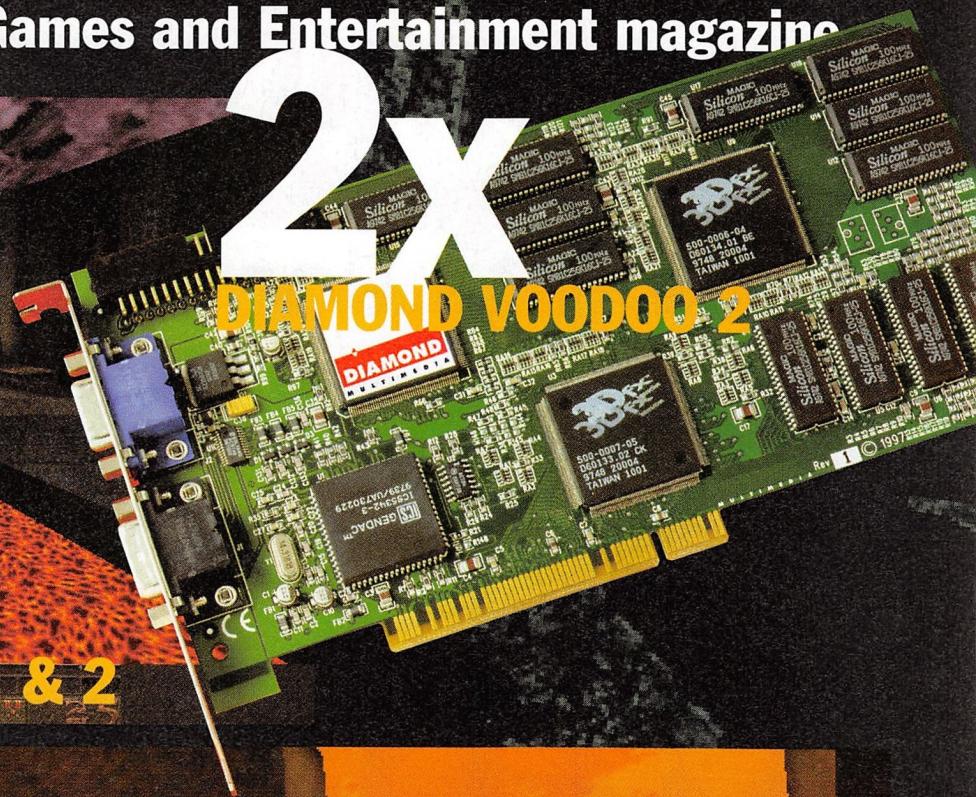
to Australia's PC Games and Entertainment magazine

2X

DIAMOND VOODOO 2

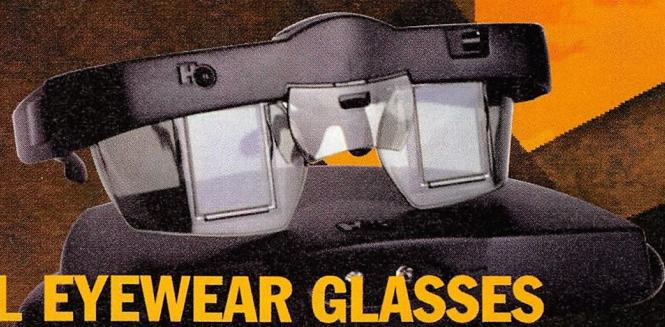
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SIDELINES

The line between films and video games has become even thinner, with the news that GT Interactive and Oddworld Inhabitants will be entering a short cinematic sequence from Abe's Exoddus [sic] for, wait for it, Oscar consideration! Described as "a mirror of the inequities found in our own society [the short animation] is an epic quest by Abe, an unlikely and reluctant hero who finds his species perilously close to extinction". And the winner is...

An important and possibly landmark court ruling has upheld GT Interactive's lawsuit against Micro Star Software for Micro Star's release of user-created levels from Duke Nukem 3D. Micro Star was adjudged to have infringed copyright when they compiled 'user created' levels for DN3D and sold them at retail on CD-ROM. Ron Chaimowitz, Chairman and CEO of GT Interactive was suitably pleased with the verdict, and said that "the commercial exploitation of player-created levels is a clear violation of the Duke Nukem 3D copyright". The verdict upheld GT's contention that they alone are authorised to release and distribute a sequel or a derivative work of its product. Micro Star are said to be planning an appeal.

From the 'Well, duh!' department comes the news that a team of British researchers have announced that playing computer games may be addictive. The team used 8 subjects for their test, which consisted of injecting the human guinea pigs with a tracer drug, placing some of them in front of an empty monitor while the others participated in a tank game and measuring them for levels of dopamine (a neurotransmitter and psychoactive chemical believed to be a key element in physiological addiction). The scientists found that levels of dopamine in the brain nearly doubled (roughly equal to the increase seen when amphetamines, or 'speed' are taken), whilst the non-game playing 'control' subjects showed no increase. "Kids, don't play games, games are bad, mmmkay?" "Mmmkay, Mr Mackey mmmkay?".

The battle between Creative Labs and the Diamond/Aureal alliance over the new boom for 3D sound cards has begun to hot up in what has now become a familiar style -

3Dfx LAUNCH NVIDIA LAWSUIT

With the emergence of so many new high quality 3D accelerators it was inevitable that 3Dfx were going to get hurt. Their retaliation, however could be described as questionable. With the success of the Sega lawsuit under their belt, 3Dfx are going back to the courtroom for some quick cash.

The company in the firing line of 3Dfx's lawyers this time is nVidia, with the suit concerning their Riva TNT. The claim is that the TNT 3D accelerator violates a patent that 3Dfx had approved in April of this year.

Like 3D accelerator technology though, the lawsuit is far from simple. The patent that 3Dfx is defending is for cascading single pass multitexturing. As the TNT uses a form of cascading single pass multitexturing 3Dfx have decided that it is theft of intellectual property.

The nVidia lawsuit could be more about renewing investor

interest than just intellectual property. If this is their game, it's working too - 3Dfx stock prices have been going up since the announcement of the suit.

Making this situation even more complex is that the entire 3D Video manufacturing community stands to lose a lot if 3Dfx wins the suit. Pretty much everyone else in the 3D chip world is utilizing technology that arguably might fall under the patent in their next generation hardware. This includes ATI, 3DLabs, Rendition and others, and if 3Dfx have a precedent they will undoubtedly go after every other manufacturer as well.

Finally, 3Dfx representatives had this to say about their lawsuit. "Firstly, the litigation is about infringement of intellectu-



al property, period - nothing more, nothing less. Unique intellectual property is worth a great deal to its owner and usually represents a significant cost as far as its development. A company that does not protect its IP will lose it". And then they got nasty, saying that "We appear to be in good company. nVidia has attracted a string of lawsuits, a fact that we believe is telling. It's especially notable to see a company as legally conservative as Silicon Graphics sue nVidia. nVidia seems to have a wanton disregard for the intellectual property of others".

Jere Lawrence

DIAMOND'S MP3 PLAYER DELAYED

In a development that will come as no surprise to anyone in the connected industries, Diamond Multimedia's Rio, a portable MP3 player has encountered opposition from many of the forces opposed to the MP3 standard. The RIAA (Recording Industry Association of America) has filed an injunction against Diamond to prevent them from releasing the player, with some success.

As we go to press, a judge has granted the RIAA a 10 day Temporary Restraining Order (TRO) for shipment of the Rio. The delay allows for the case to be heard, though the RIAA has been forced to lodge a \$US500,000 bond to be held until the case is decided - and if the judgement is in favour of Diamond then the half million dollars will go to them as restitution.

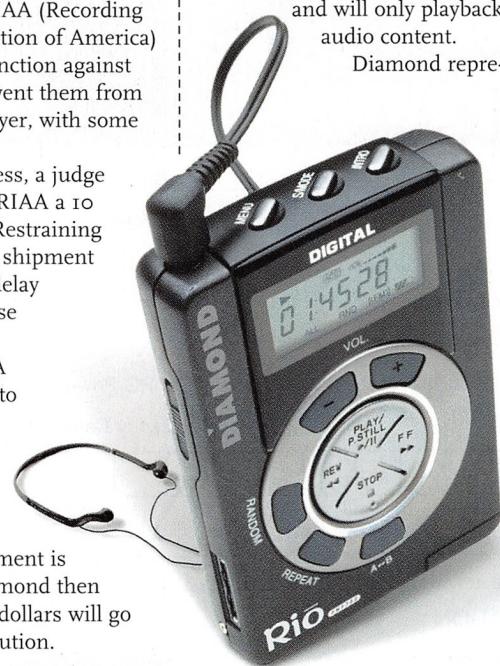
The RIAA contends that the Rio player would support the distribution and proliferation of unlicensed musical recordings via the internet, though Diamond were quick to point out that the Rio player cannot record, and will only playback audio content.

Diamond repre-

sentatives have also claimed that the lawsuit is akin to an attempt to outlaw inkjet printers because they can be used to print out personal copies of articles from websites.

Diamond have also gained support from many pro-MP3 bodies, including Michael Robertson, president of Z company, owners of the MP3.com website who has named high profile artists such as the Beastie Boys and record labels such as Hollywood Records that have released songs in MP3 format, and said that over 4 million legal songs have been downloaded from MP3.com alone.

Ken Wirt, Diamond VP of marketing, has stated that Diamond are willing to work co-operatively with the RIAA to halt illegal distribution of unlicensed music, and has strongly refuted claims made by the RIAA that devices such as the Rio would have no market if it wasn't for the prevalence of illicit MP3 files and sites on the Internet.



SIR-TECH PUBLISHING CLOSES ITS DOORS

Yet another small to medium sized publishing and distribution company has fallen, with the news that Sir-Tech Software has gone under and shut down its operations. The company is best known for the acclaimed 'Jagged Alliance' series, and their 'Wizardry' role playing series. The good news, however, is that the development arm of the company will continue to function, with both Jagged Alliance 2 and Wizardry 8 still set for release, though both games have been delayed until the first quarter of 1999.

The catalyst for the closure of the publishing and distribution arm of Sir-Tech was, apparently, an unsuccessful take over attempt by GT Interactive. Norman Sirotek, president of Sir-Tech Canada (the develop-

ment arm of the company) stated that the commercial growth of computer games has resulted in a small number of large, cashed-up publishing companies dominating the market, because they have the ability to swallow losses on unpopular games, as well as huge advertising budgets to promote their titles. The result is that it has become all but impossible for small independent publishers to make a suc-

SIR-TECH

cess of their efforts, hence the folding of Sir-Tech Software.

Sir-Tech Canada is at present looking for publishers for both Wizardry 8 and Jagged Alliance 2, and the rumour is that GT Interactive are keen to take the games on.

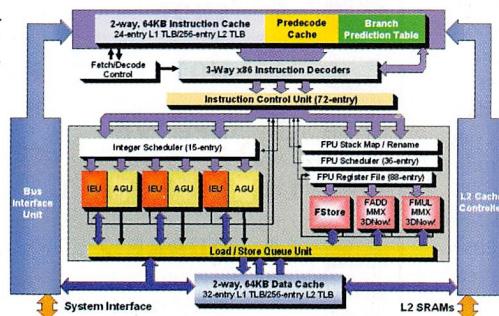
INDUSTRY GETS ITS FIRST GLIMPSE AT K7 ARCHITECTURE

AMD have finally released more information about their seventh generation processor. It was during the 11th annual Microprocessor forum, held in October in Sunnyvale, California that Dirk Meyer announced important information about some of the features of the K7 processor.

Some of the most exciting features of the upcoming K7 processor is that it will run with a 200MHz system bus! The system bus will utilise the Alpha EV6 protocol as we already knew, but rumour has it that the EV6 enabled K7 could reach system bus speeds of upwards of 400MHz!

The K7 will also have a Pentium II arrangement for its level 2 cache, in that it will be separate from the processor core and mounted on a cartridge -

and probably run at half the processor clock. This cache can also range in size from 512KB to a whopping 8MB. The level 1 cache has also been increased to 128KB, 64KB each for data and instruction caches. The K7 will be built on a 0.25 micron



process and come in speeds of 500+ MHz and should reach the mighty 1GHz barrier in later incarnations. The only real problem that we see is the fact that we have to wait for the thing, as it's not expected to appear in PC systems until sometime in the first half of 1999.

GW

SIDELINES

lawsuits. Creative has recently filed suit against Aureal for an advertisement that Aureal ran comparing the performance capabilities of Aureal's Vortex 2 sound chip (featured in Diamond's Monster Sound MX300 sound card) with the Sound Blaster Live!. John Danforth, VP of Creative Labs, has said that "If you're going to do comparative advertising, you had better make sure you're doing it accurately ... consumers have even threatened to return Creative products because of the [allegedly incorrect] information". Aureal representatives responded by challenging Creative to "resolve these kinds of matters in the marketplace, not in the court room".

As many expected, Carmageddon 2 has encountered problems with classification in some European countries, namely England and Germany. The British Board of Film Classification (BBFC) even took the unprecedented step of bringing in a team of psychologists to assess the content of the game for harmful effects on impressionable children (and, presumably, adults). The game will be reworked for England and Germany to include undead zombies rather than real people as road fodder, as this makes everything sane and normal. It seems very likely that the same path will be followed for the Australian release, though nothing is definite just yet.

With the recent arrival on our shores of Nell McAndrew the fake Lara (as opposed to the real simulated Lara), Tomb Raider fever is beginning to peak, especially with the news that scriptwriters (and the term has been used loosely) are hard at work on the script for the film version of Lovely Lara's escapades. The first draft hasn't found favour with a few critics though, as can be seen on Dark Horizons (www.darkhorizons.com) - a respected film review and gossip site. The reviewer also happened to be a huge TR fan, and apart from noting that scriptwriter Brent V Friedman's past credits included Mortal Kombat: Annihilation, he felt that the first draft of the script was "old and dusty", "pretty wretched", full of "awkward contrivance", and that the character of Lara "is just wrong, wrong wrong". In fairness, this was a review of a first draft, and there is a rumour of Paramount having a different (and hopefully better) scriptwriter on the job as well. Ah well, we're sure Lara will get the (film) treatment she deserves...

Watch This Step...

SIDELINES

It's a tale of woe that happens to many games at around this time of year - the dreaded (for publishers) Christmas season slippage. Electronic Arts have announced that both Alpha Centauri and Sim City 3000 have slipped until after the Christmas period, and 3DO's Heroes of Might and Magic 3 has suffered a similar fate. SC3K has only recently entered into alpha testing, and though EA are still aiming for a 'late December' release it seems likely that this may be optimistic.

The Bitmap Brothers have been around for a very long time, since back in the days of the C64. Lately they've been fairly quiet though, with nothing happening since the arcade action antics of 'Z'. News is coming through now that they're back, have done some 'internal restructuring', signed a publishing deal with GT Interactive, and are hard at work on their next game - the sequel to Z called Z2. No details yet.

Much to the surprise of nobody, and the disquiet of external developers, Psygnosis announced the closure of its Manchester development studio, and indicated that it will concentrate primarily, although not exclusively, on putting out PlayStation games. It has been rumoured that this is part of a slimming-down strategy pursued by Sony in order to make the company more attractive to potential buyers. But don't hold your breath waiting for Sony to flog the company it no longer appears to want....

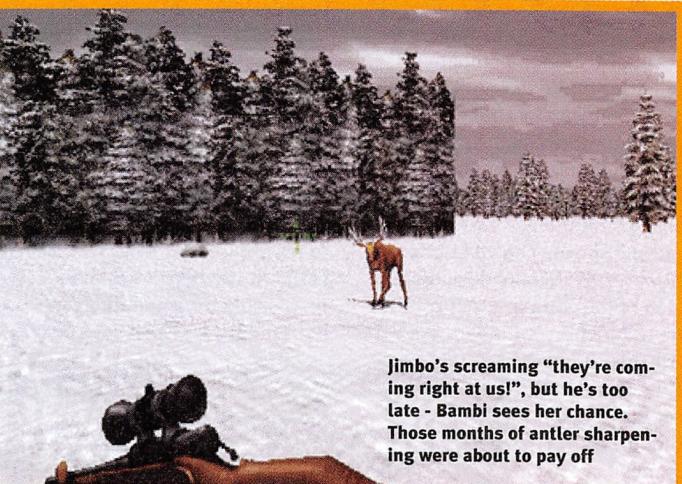
Virgin Interactive Entertainment still soldiers on in an extremely truncated form. While there are, apparently, a few bids in for the rump end of the company, its remaining employees are hoping that a management buy-out bid will succeed. Hasbro, meanwhile, has got stuck into the task of absorbing the recently acquired MicroProse - MicroProse employees are due to start moving into the toy giant's HQ near Heathrow Airport any day now. Earlier in the year, Hasbro acquired rival toy manufacturer Tiger Electronics, whose Furby talking soft-toy has become the most desirable toy for this Christmas. So does this mean we can expect a Tamagotchi-style Furby game?

BAMBI FINALLY GETS REVENGE

Simon and Schuster Interactive and Cedant Software have recently announced what many have seen as an important and much needed game - an anti-Deer Hunter. The tables will be turned in 'Deer Avenger', with the player taking on the role of a deer hunting down the deer hunters. But players won't just have deer antlers to use as weaponry, they'll also be able to

use M-16's, slingshots (with either soft or hard deer pellets), and for those times when a group of deer hunters are found together, a Bazooka ("it's time to stop kidding around").

The game is the brainchild of Brian McCann, a staff writer for the always amusing Late Night with Conan O'Brien Show, and



Jimbo's screaming "they're coming right at us!", but he's too late - Bambi sees her chance. Those months of antler sharpening were about to pay off

he will be injecting some of his trademark humour into the game. To track down the hunters, players will be able to make use of more than a dozen genuine hunter calls, including "Free Beer here!" and "Help, I'm naked and I have pizza!", as well as using deer farts to smoke the hunters out of hiding.

The game will feature three realistic environments, including West Virginia in Autumn - a popular Redneck hangout, Connecticut in Spring ("track yuppie hunters too dumb to stay in their SUV's"), and Minnesota in Winter ("look at the goofy hats on them fellers!"). We can't wait.

DIAMOND FINANCES NOT SO ROSY

Diamond Multimedia announced their 3rd quarter financials today, with a total loss of \$US22.2 million dollars (that's 8.8 million Macka's meals, give or take a Mc Feast or two).

Diamond dropped \$0.63 per share this year, compared to a net loss of \$2.5 million, or \$0.07 per share in the 3rd quarter of last year. On the up side though, for the last nine months, net revenues were \$481.7 million, up 87% from \$257.4 million for the first three quarters of 1997. Net loss year-to-date however is only \$22.6 million, or \$0.65 per share, compared to a net loss of \$52.6 million, or \$1.54 per share for the first three quarters of 1997 (all figures are in US\$). For those without a penchant for financial analysis, this all means that Diamond Multimedia aren't making as much money as they would like to.

They do plan to rectify this, however, by moving toward a faster 'short cycle' inventory model (producing their goods in smaller quantities during the course of the year rather than manufacturing them all in one big hit). Diamond representatives have also said that they expect to see a sharp upturn in their merchandise throughput during the fourth quarter (i.e. during the Christmas spending spree).

DIAMOND

MULTIMEDIA

TOP TEN GAMES

Rank	Title	Developer / Distributor
TW	LW	
1	1 NEED FOR SPEED 3	ELECTRONIC ARTS / E.A.
2	5 DUNE 2000	V.I.E / E.A
3	2 UNREAL	GT INTERACTIVE / ROADSHOW
4	6 CROC	FOX / EA
5	4 MOTOCROSS MADNESS	MICROSOFT / VARIOUS
6	3 AFL '98	EA SPORTS / EA
7	14 STARCRAFT	BLIZZARD / WOLF
8	16 QUAKE 2	ID SOFTWARE / ACTIVISION
9	7 COMMANDOS	EIDOS / OZISOFT
10	13 LINKS LS '98	ACCESS / OZISOFT

Week ending 11th October

The ACER best selling charts are carefully compiled from a sample panel of retailers selected across Australia including mass merchants, department stores, specialty software stores and independent outlets. Retailers surveyed include Myer Grace Bros, K Mart, Target, Big W, Harvey Norman, Computer Super stores, Hi-Tech World, Video Games Heaven, Games Wizards, Headam Computers, and Software Today. ACER assumes no responsibility for any errors or omissions ©1997

Charts supplied by Australian Computer Entertainment Review

ACER

NewsWire UK

Steve Boxer

If you ever get the feeling that Australia sometimes seems like a backwater of the computer games world, you may be comforted by the fact that we get that feeling over here too. BT Wireplay recently held an event called Quakeadelica, billed as the UK Quake II championships, which superficially appeared to be a welcome glimpse of American-style gaming razzmatazz, but left all the Brits who attended nursing nothing more pleasant than inferiority complexes.

Wireplay had flown Thresh (Dennis Fong), the reigning American Quake II champion over - the idea being that he would take on whoever had won the Wireplay UK Champion crown. Thresh served only to highlight the inadequacies of Wireplay and the unattractiveness of on-line gaming in a country which (because BT refuses to relinquish its de facto monopoly) isn't lucky enough to have free local phone calls.



(from left) Thresh, Billox and... erm... Jo Guest

The embarrassing one-sidedness of the final (Thresh 56, Billox -1) wasn't helped when the final was farcically delayed while Thresh struggled to setup his USB mouse (an accessory which has yet to reach British shores) while everybody debated whether Thresh's opponent was even among the top 10 best fraggers in the country. To describe Thresh's victory as humiliating for the British contender would be to indulge our national penchant for extreme understatement....

On the same night as

Quakeadelica, Eidos took over the Natural History Museum for a pre-launch Tomb Raider III party. Unsurprisingly, the whole thing was long on style and short on substance, giving away just the merest hints of what the game will be like, although it certainly looks great and Core's abandonment of TR's single gameplay path is a huge step forward. But the game should be in the shops by the time you read this....

...Who Nose?

NewsWire US

Don St. John

Lord, here comes the flood.

Yeah, I'm a Peter Gabriel fan, but that sentence isn't so much a reference to his song as it is to the flood of games coming in the mailbox now.

Christmas comes just a little early for us reviewers (I'll try not to gloat), and frankly I'll probably put 'em all to the side when that final of Half-Life shows up. But we've still got to be thinking ahead, so here's the tip on three future games we should all be salivating for. Warning: It's not all good news.

Homeworld

This Sierra offering is actually nearly done, and it is just amazing. I had a chance recently to get my hands on this, and it is the mix we've secretly all wanted—real-time strategy crossed with action-based space shooters. Imagine if you could take the ships of Master Of Orion and actually manipulate them, and you've got the idea. After grouping a batch of space fighters and sending off into 360-degree, six-degrees-of-freedom

combat, you may never want to play a land-based RT stratfest again.

The Wheel Of Time

The reps for this say it's still on track for release in the first half of '99—figure on June. And it's progressing nicely. Developer Legend Entertainment has a lot of the detail work nailed down, such as character art, single- and multiplayer maps, and environments for the citadels, the clutch places in this game. AI to come soon. Meanwhile, Legend will have its hands full with some other hot stuff; its work on WoT led Epic Megagames to tap it to develop Unreal 2.

Prey

The news here isn't so hot, folks. Prey project leader Paul Schuytema and coder William Scarboro (names you'll find on some of 3D Realms' past better



titles) both left the company last week as I write. What's that mean for you? A longer wait for the game: 3D Realms honcho Scott Miller says to figure on seeing this in 2000, not this year. As with any game that slips that badly, who knows what technology will have overtaken it by then?

Wing Commander

Here's another franchise that lost a bunch of its developers - 11, to be exact. However, that's not the lion's share of Origin's people on the WC games by a long shot, and company spokesmen say that with the free Secret Ops done, they don't expect much of a hit on development of the next WC game. That's a ways out, though, with no solid plans as yet.

AOpen DVD-RAM

Servex Australia: (02) 9870 1999

Specifications:

CD formats supported:

Read / Write: DVD-RAM, PD

Read Only: DVD-ROM, DVD-R, CD-DA, CD-ROM / XA, Photo CD, Video CD, CD-Extra, CD-R / RW [120MM Disc Media]

DVD-RAM: Single-sided: 2.6GB per disc
Double-sided: 5.2GB per disc

Interface specification

SCSI-2 (Fast SCSI) 50pin interface
(Supports SCAM Level 1)

Performance

Data Transfer Rate:

Synchronous: 10 MB/s

Asynchronous: 5 MB/s

Sustained Date Transfer Rate:

DVD-RAM: 1,385 KB/s

DVD-ROM: 2,770 KB/s (2X speed)

PD: 518 ~ 1,141 KB/s

CD-ROM: 3,000 KB/s max. (20X speed)

Average Seek Time:

DVD-RAM: 120 ms

DVD-ROM, PD, CD-ROM: 85 ms

Cache Buffer Memory: 2MB

Test configuration

- Pentium II 300MHz
- Abit BH6 Motherboard
- Creative Blaster RivaTNT 16MB video card
- Quantum Fireball SE 4.2GB UDMA/33 Hard drive
- Adaptec 2940 SCSI Host adapter.
- Windows 98

This drive is the first DVD-RAM drive we've had through the PC PowerPlay labs. The DVD-RAM specification is the re-writeable DVD format and allows for a massive 5.2GB per disc! That is 2.6GB per side, and yes, the cartridge needs to be turned over to access the other 2.6GB. This is not too much of a problem and brings me back to days of old when 5.1/4 inch drives only had one read/write head. Then the capacity was of a disk was only 160KB per side. The Aopen DVD-RAM



Adaptec Threadmark V2.0

Data transfer Rate	0.23 MB/sec
Average CPU Utilization	5.82 %

File Transfer test

	Time started	Time finished
10MB file FAT32 (Hard Drive) -> FAT16 (DVD-RAM)	11:06:25.24	11:06:36.74
10MB file FAT32 (Hard Drive) -> FAT32 (Hard Drive)	10:29:44.88	10:29:48.02

drive specifications are very attractive indeed virtually able to read any CD and DVD format in existence.

Seek and you shall receive

A DVD-RAM drive is no replacement for a hard drive. Yes, it does offer huge storage capacity, but it also suffers from the same performance problems as CD-ROM mechanisms.

It has to do with what's called the average seek times. The average seek time is the time it takes the head/lens to move from one extreme of the disk to the other. Seek times on hard drives are around the 9-18ms range while CD and DVD drives will have seek times usually in the 100's of milliseconds. Looking at the Adaptec Threadmark test will prove this. The reported overall throughput of the drive was only .25MB/s - not very fast at all. The reason being is that the Threadmark tests push a drive very hard, moving the head excessively to test the true performance. DVD-RAM drives will not perform well on these sorts of tests.

Archive Away

What these drives are absolutely perfect for is archival storage or backup. Just imagine what you could store on one of these drives and then think

DVD-RAM's aren't going to replace CD drives just yet, but they're perfect for long term storage and back-ups

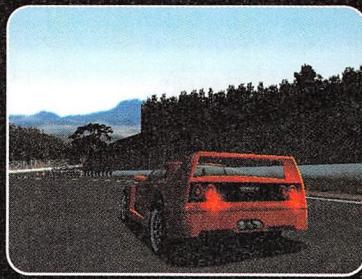
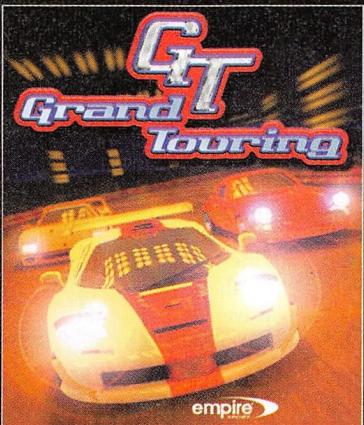
about the fact that it is a removable media, so it's virtually endless storage. The cost of these DVD-RAM discs are also very appealing especially when compared to a Syquest Syjet or Iomega Jaz cartridge and they have more than twice the storage capacity. The other test we performed was a simple one. We simply did a copy of a 10MB file from a hard drive to the DVD-RAM cartridge. As you can see the time was 11.5 seconds, very respectable, and much better result than the Threadmark test. It just proves the fact that if the head doesn't have to thrash much the drive's performance isn't too bad, again perfect for archiving and backing up of important information.

Apart from the obvious fact that this isn't an excuse to get more primary hard drive capacity, this drive is great. For those that are looking for massive storage capacity in a removable media drive and the ability to double as a DVD/CD-ROM drive then this drive is a must have.

Garry Wallis

GT Grand Touring

Get set to burn rubber with the fastest, most challenging super-racer available on PC CD-Rom. Grand Touring's unique AI system pits you against real, thinking opponents in this arcade-quality motor-racing sim. With the fastest PC graphics technology on the planet, Grand Touring is the ultimate mix of motor-racing intelligence and adrenaline.



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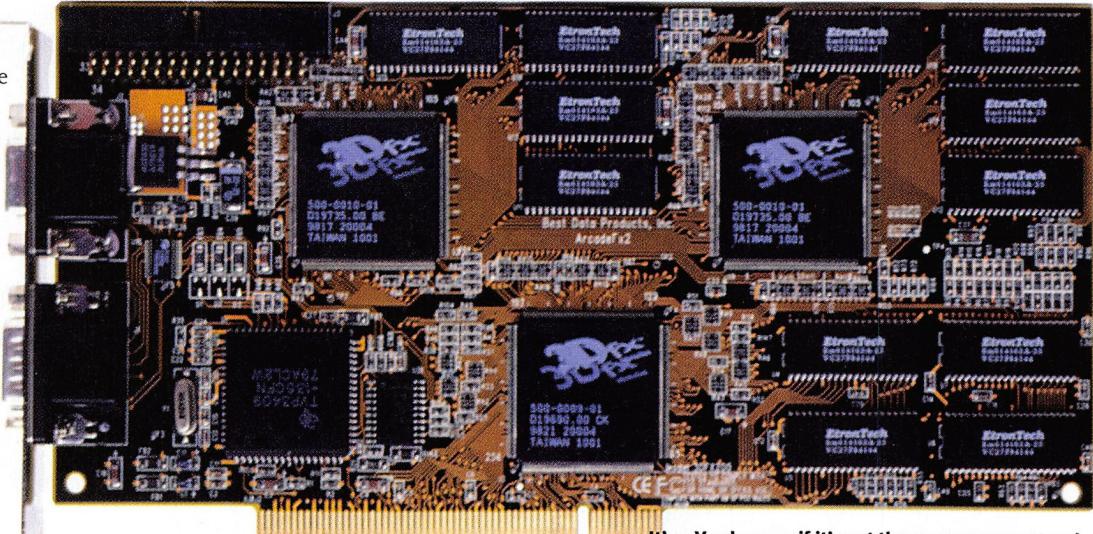
www.metrogames.com.au

ARCADE FXII 8MB VOODOO2

Xitel: (02) 6241 8272 (xitel@xitel.com) RRP: \$499

What?? You haven't got yourself a Voodoo2 card yet? Come on, get with the times people! Well, actually, you probably haven't made such a bad decision after all. Nowadays, every man, woman and his/her dog has a Voodoo2 card out on the market, and the competition is cutthroat. Prices are plummeting, and those who are set to reap the benefits are you, the customers.

Xitel's ArcadeFXII falls into the 'cut down package' range. Along with the card and drivers, you're offered a full version of Wipeout XL and a selection of some game demos (including G-Police, Formula 1, Hunter Hunted, Montezuma's Return, and a few others worthy of little note). And how much are you asked to pay for this deal? A paltry \$499 (RRP), which of course isn't all that paltry when compared with the recommended retail price (at press time) of the Diamond



8MB Monster2 of \$399, or Creative's 8Mb at \$449.

Why would you buy the Arcade FXII then? Well, it's definitely the price point that Xitel are banking on as being the persuader - on the box there's a comparison between Diamond and Creative's cards (they're all the same, of course), with the tag line of 'same

It's a Voodoo2, so if it's got the games you want and the price is right, then grab it

performance, lower price!'. Obviously, the distributors will have to do some reassessment of their price to make the Arcade FXII a viable option. If you do see it in the stores and it's cheaper than the competition then it might be a worthy purchase.

XITEL STORM VX PCI SOUND CARD

Specifications:

Midi polyphony: 64 Instruments or simultaneous notes
Effects: Reverb, Chorus
Full Duplex: Yes
Sample Rate: 5Hz - 48KHz
Front & Rear speaker support: No
3D Sound Support: Aureal
RRP: \$149
Contact: Xitel (02) 6241 8272, or xitel@xitel.com

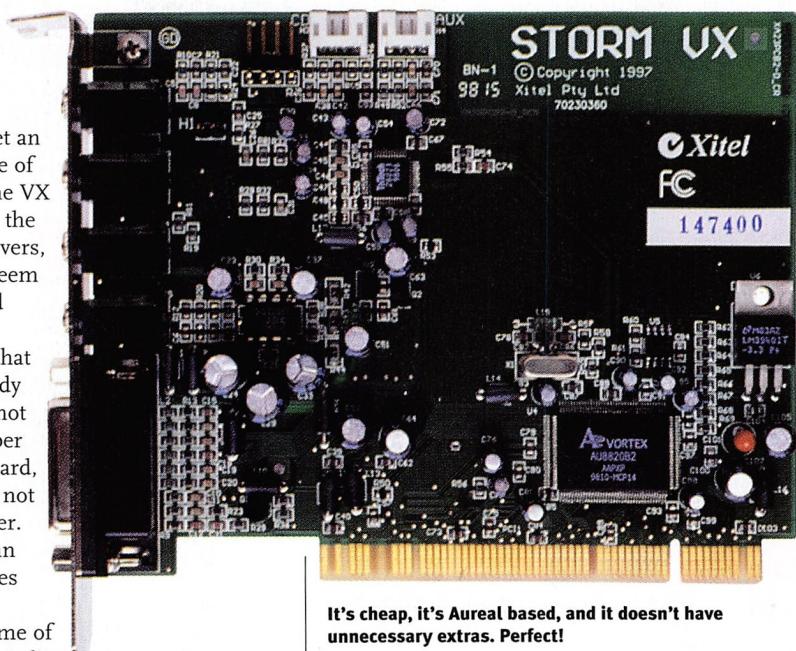
Xitel are a relatively new Australian company (based in Canberra), and they are deservedly making some inroads into the more hyped overseas sound cards. The Storm VX is the second in their series of 3D sound cards - the first (the Storm 3D) used the OTI-610 chip - but the VX model uses Aureal's AU8820 Vortex DSP Chip.

Though the VX doesn't offer separate outputs for front and rear speakers, it does feature a separate 'line out' and headphone jack, so you can use headphones as well as a subwoofer, for example. With Unreal cranked up and a headphone/subwoofer combo, you're really going to experience a top quality sound experience, and it's better

than good through a standard 2 speaker combo too.

You won't get an extensive bundle of software with the VX though, it's just the card and the drivers, which doesn't seem to be such a bad idea to us. Why include games that you might already have, or might not want? It's cheaper to just sell the card, and at \$149 it's not a bad price either.

It's Australian developed, comes at a nice price, doesn't have some of the useless extras that most people don't need (like SPDIF's, for example), and it sounds great too. Top stuff.



It's cheap, it's Aureal based, and it doesn't have unnecessary extras. Perfect!

AOPEN 40x CD-ROM

Servex Australia: (02) 9870 1999 RRP: \$199

Faster is nearly always better, and while many of us would prefer SCSI devices in our system purely because of how fast they are, price often puts them out of our reach. However, EIDE drives (both CD-ROM drives and Hard Drives) with the ability to make use of Ultra DMA-33 can nearly match SCSI drives in terms of performance, and the prices are much more attractive to boot. The AOpen 40x is such a drive, so along with a massive 40 speed (peak) drive, you can also transfer data using the UDMA standard, which makes for way fast communication between your devices. The 40x supports all the usual CD formats (as well as the new CD-RW), and data transfers can reach up to 6000kb per second, which is rather snappy. And if that isn't fast enough for you, you'll also get some nifty soft-

ware bundled with the drive as well - like the full version of Norton AntiVirus, and their CD-ROM emulator program 'Virtual Drive'. If you're still stuck in the dark ages with a pissy 4 speed CD, and you're looking to upgrade then this is well worth a look, and at \$199 it's a bargain too.

They're just getting faster and faster - but don't expect CD-ROM's to get much above 40x



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Wicked3D Voodoo2

Fully loaded with 12MB of high speed EDO DRAM the Wicked3D will give up to 40% better performance on Direct3D games than other Voodoo2 based graphics cards. The Re2Flex technology shatters the 800x600 (1024x768 SLI) barrier by providing resolutions up to 1024x672 or 1024x1024 in SLI. Support for 160 games with H3D Eyewear in stereoscopic 3D.

Wicked3D Vision

Take your game experience to new heights with the 3D Wicked Vision H3D wireless LCD Eyewear system! When coupled with the Wicked3D Voodoo2 or Vengeance, over 160 of the latest games are supported including Quake 2, Jedi Knight, Unreal, Need For Speed 3 and more.

ENTERTAINMENT TECHNOLOGY

RACE LEADER

FORCE FEEDBACK STEERING WHEEL • Ubisoft • \$279

Isn't it just the way? You fork over that huge wad of cash over to a sneering salesman, and walk out of the store with a huge big box under your arm determined to have fun. You arrive home, then realise that certain bits don't fit. Aaargh!

There's really no excuse for you not being able to connect your new Race Leader Force Feedback wheel out of the box. The wheel uses a 9 pin connector, and most game ports use 15 hole jacks. What gives? Shame on you, Guillemot.

Once you get that inconvenience out of the way, you can sit yourself down to your first Force Feedback Steering Wheel! Coupled with a two-pedal block, the Race Leader aims at being the comprehensive, all in one game control package. It's sturdy enough (with effective suction cups) to use without touching the clamps included in the package. However, on anything but carpet, the pedal mock-up will slip and slide, so grip tape or other innovative methods will be necessary to keep it stable.

Featured on the face of the wheel are 10 buttons, and a directional pad. Within finger's reach behind the face is a gear change paddle on each side of

the wheel. So there's the ability to program a total of 20 separate commands for each of the buttons on the wheel, not that you'll need to, of course. Surprising was the inclusion of a directional pad on the face of the wheel. Not a bad concept, but the positioning of the d-pad renders it almost useless - use it for longer than a few minutes and the cramps and strain will set in. Still, it's useful for navigating around game menus and the like.

The wheel only turns just under a hundred degrees both ways. As for the actual force

feedback function, the Race Leader is redeemed. Force feedback is a welcome addition to the game playing experience, and this wheel shakes and whirrs in a totally satisfactory manner. Disappointing was that the actual pedal mock up wasn't also setup to vibrate. A few games included with the package to test out the wheel would also have been welcome.



One of the glut of Force Feedback wheels to hit lately, but a good one nonetheless

WINGMAN FORCE

Logitech • \$269

Logitech have had years of experience in bringing us a tool for every gaming occasion, so we were bitterly disappointed to see them suffer the same lack of insight as Guillemot did with their force feed back steering wheel. Within the box lies the vibrating stick of joy, and at the end of the cord is a USB connector, and a 9-pin. Not an ever-so-handy 15-pin plug.

Oh how a simple adaptor would have been appreciated. It'd cost Logitech next to nothing to include one in the box, but instead, you'll need to make sure you get one yourself. Bah!

Despite the odd and impractical placement of a couple of buttons, the Wingman stick performs well



The stick itself isn't much of a radical departure from the WingMan series that we've come to either love or hate. The throttle wheel is there, and there are 9 buttons and an eight-way hat switch to play around with. The button groove/grip, however, is set at an awkward angle and is slightly too deep, as a result, the only comfortable way of pressing this button is using the lower half of the thumb.

Using the Immersion I-Force Force Feedback technology, this stick vibrates, again, sufficiently enough. As it seems to be with Force Feedback products, success is not gauged so much by the proficiency to shake and vibrate but in the way the overall stick is put together, and how it feels. To this end, the WingMan force does the job nicely.

Included in the package is Decent Freespace, Redline Racer, Warbirds and the very helpful Logitech setup software.

WICKED 3D H3D EYEWEAR METABYTE WICKED 3D

3D Games lacking depth (groan)?

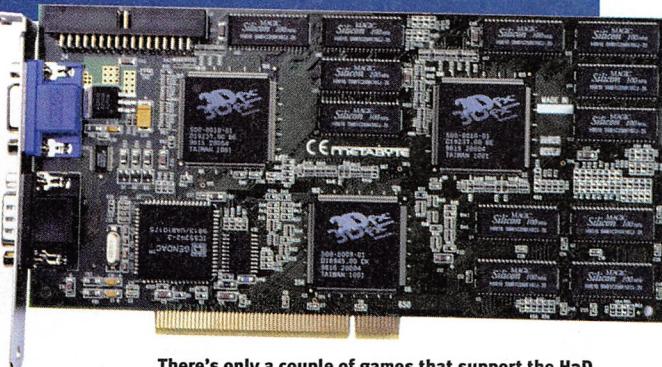
3D shutter glasses have been commercially available to the general public for about 3 years now, though they weren't a big success initially because LCD 3D in games required double the processor power and there was also a problem with earlier glasses' refresh rate being too low and causing noticeable flicker.

These 2 issues are caused purely by the way that shutter glasses work, which is actually quite ingenious. The game outputs the left image on the monitor onto the left lens, and the right shutter darkens ensuring that the left eye sees only the left image, and then on the next cycle the opposite occurs. In essence it halves the refresh rate of your monitor - which with older shutter technology caused a disturbing flicker. The H3D has a maximum refresh rate of 79Hz, however, so this

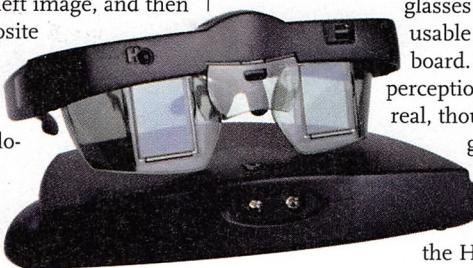
pretty much alleviates flicker problems.

Having to process a left and right image does mean that your PC has to work twice as hard, and this is where Metabyte step in. With the Wicked 3D you will receive a 20% improvement over a standard Voodoo 2. A Quake II non-cached timedemo (H3D enabled) scored 29.7 on a generic card and 36.64 on the Wicked 3D. Ultimately the H3D

glasses are very usable on any Voodoo 2 board. The sense of depth perception they offer is very real, though support for games is very lacking at the moment - the only really playable games for the H3D are Quake and



There's only a couple of games that support the H3D glasses so far, but they are Quake and Quake 2



Quake II, which is a bit disappointing.

The H3D are a vast improvement over previous shutter glasses, but after prolonged use (more than an hour) your eyes will dry up and you'll get a slight headache requiring you to take a break. Apart from that these glasses give a brilliant sense of depth perception and do add tremendous atmosphere to the games that support them. JL

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FALLOUT 2



After testing the waters, Interplay dive in the deep end with a grand RPG.

Category RPG

Players 1

Publisher Interplay

Available Soon

Fallout 2 will have much more of an impact on the RPG market than its predecessor ever did. Sure, Fallout did establish that there was room for old-style classic RPGing, but things have changed in the last year. The public has become more aware of the need for change within the genre. The question is, just how far will they go to support it?

RPG identity crisis

The entire Role Playing Game genre is currently going through a metamorphosis, and the current and most timely phase seems to be the almighty identity crisis. Scores of RPG's are headed our way over the next year, and the majority of these are opting to shed the more conventional and well known RPG characteristics in favour of something entirely different. Borrowing heavily from the adventure genre, and taking a stronger pinch from the action game, a brief look over the required spec list for a number of upcoming well known RPG's reads more like the list required for the latest 3D shooter. 1999 could well prove to be the year that the RPG emerged from the dark ages and took the genre in new and exciting directions, or the year that the modern RPG was rejected by gamers in favour of the old school flavour. Whatever happens, we the gamers will cast our vote for future of the genre this Christmas, with the power of selective spending.

Vs. Baldur's Gate

Fallout 2 will be going up against the eagerly anticipated Baldur's Gate this coming



Christmas. Even though both products come under the Black Isle division of Interplay, their development has been quite separate indeed. And all other RPG developers will be keeping a close on just what happens with the two titles, because both games, while separate, together represent the more traditional approach to RPG design. Will gamers go for stalwart safe bets such as these, or will they be daring and hand their money over for a less conventional (though not necessarily a less valid) RPG like Thief: The Dark Project?

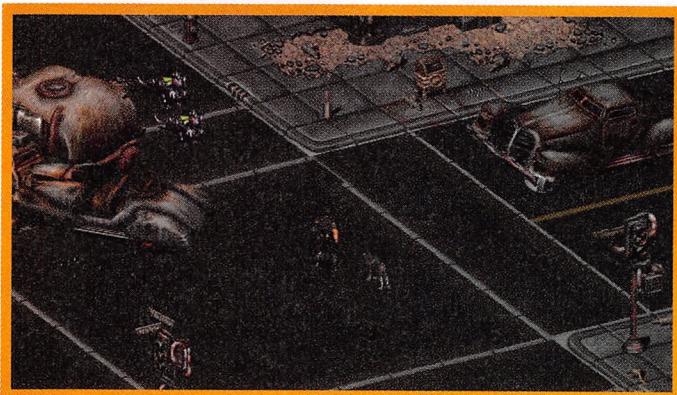
Either way, our decision at the counter this year will greatly affect just what we'll be seeing in the very near future.

But for the meantime, there are games to play. Fallout 2 should very much be read as Fallout V2.0. While there is a new storyline and a whole assortment of new weapons and

items to discover, the very heart of the game remains unchanged. The graphics are the same, as are the basic game mechanics. So what's new?

Bullet in the head

Fallout 2 should simply be better than Fallout in almost every respect. Skills this time will



be much more balanced and useful than in Fallout. For example, the intelligence based skills and perks in Fallout were rather useless. While great care went into allowing for a diplomatic "communicative" character to be created, rarely were there situations where these skills could be put to any worthwhile use. Players soon discovered that nothing talked like a high "small guns" skill level and a bullet between the eyes. This time around, players will have the option, if playing a less action-oriented character, to use their skills to better avoid getting into any physical confrontation with other characters. A whole heap of new skills have also been introduced.

The party will also behave in a more intelligent manner. Remember how Ian would keep missing his target and shoot you instead? And how he'd run straight into the thick of action at the beginning of a fight, even when the odds were

against him? Fallout 2 will allow players to set more detailed strategy levels. Inventory management will be present as well, so you can give your party members those three spare combat jackets you were carrying.

The game world is also much larger. Town sizes in Fallout 2 surpass anything seen in the first game. Players will now find it much easier to get lost in the game, as well as getting lost in the overall storyline. With no imposing time limit in Fallout 2, the player is free to wander and explore the story at their own pace. Black Isle Studios suggest though, that because the storyline is so compelling players will rarely feel the need to stray too far from the plot in the first place.

With so many great looking RPG's heading our way, it's going to be half the struggle working out which one to choose. Review next issue.

ENERGY ANYONE?!



with GUARANA and GINSENG

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Energy Blast. So you say 'OK I'LL TRY IT'. You take a squirt and you say 'mmm, tastes good'. Then you take a second squirt, and... 'WOW!' You feel this INSTANT surge of ENERGY!! YOU'RE READY for anything. YOU FEEL GREAT! FANTASTIC!

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ENERGY BLAST with GUARANA and GINSENG

CAUTION

DO NOT TAKE IT AT NIGHT UNLESS YOU NEED THE EXTRA ENERGY OR WISH TO REMAIN AWAKE.

ULTIMA ONLINE:

The Second Age

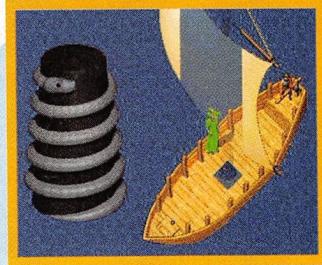


**The second generation of ORPGs, or just the final version of UO?
You be the judge...**

Category Online RPG
Players 1-5000
 (per server)
Publisher Origin/EA
Available Now

When Ultima Online: The Second Age was announced a few months back, the general online role-playing public could do little else but scratch their heads in candid contemplation. It was described by Origin as the definitive UO expansion pack. Everyone knew though, that Ultima Online was released a little too early in the development cycle (ie, still in beta), and could have easily spent another 6 months being refined and perfected behind closed doors. People were also fully aware that while over the course of UO's maiden year the game had slowly and steadily improved, there was still a fair way to go before players could begin the more traditional fight against good or evil (depending on their karmic affiliation of course) instead of battling the various (and still rather numerous) game bugs and exploits. So if the game was still needing some attention, why the expansion pack? Shouldn't Origin finish the core game first? The Second Age generated some enthusiastic (and quite cynical, we must add) interest. Just what were those crafty Origin people up to?

With the new translating software, all these people could be speaking in Japanese and you'd never know



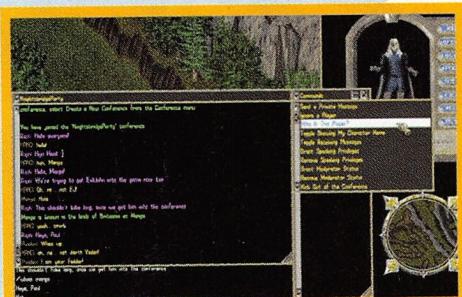
We were first, so ner!

What with the recent trend of just about every game developer and their dog announcing their own crack at the online RPG, Origin have realised the need to reassert their position as pioneers within this fledgling genre. With the ever looming EverQuest (being perhaps the most anticipated of



the next wave of online RPGs) nearing completion, and the desperately impressive sounding ORPG Middle Earth (based on Tolkein's works) turning plenty of heads, The Second Age has

been labelled by many as a simple exercise of damage control. Perhaps it's a polite reminder that UO is here and now, and that Ultima Online has got perhaps the most important feature





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of all the current or up and coming ORPGs - a wealth of experience under its belt.

The Second Age is however, more than just a money making, market shaping exercise aimed at winning back some attention and maybe even the odd "retired" subscriber or two. The Second Age is primarily the result of the UO develop-

They've been at it for over a year now, in full commercial release, so hopefully this time they'll actually get it right



ment team spending a year experiencing all that comes with running an online persistent virtual world, and taking notice. Promised with the release is a new land to explore, a slew of new creatures and animals to interact with, as well as a stack of core gameplay enhancements that will make the average UO player's virtual life that much easier.

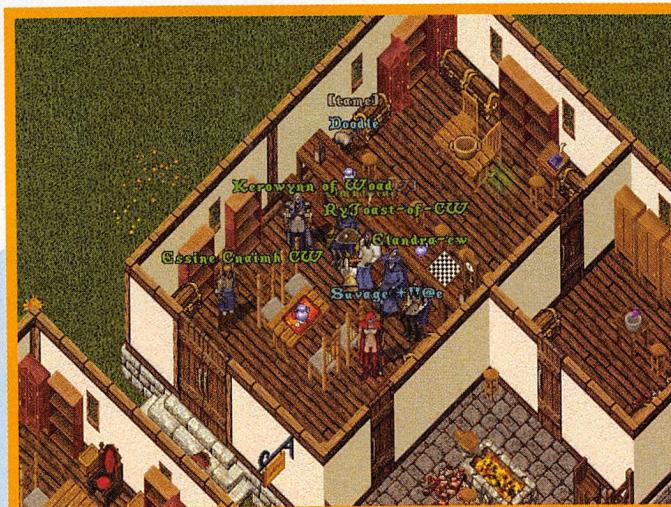
More dirt!

The new landmass is huge, but not as large as the Britannia seen in UO. Rather than a near fifty-fifty ratio of land to sea, the Second Age is primarily made up of terra firma, bounded mostly by mountains. Scattered throughout are several new types of terrain, with swamps and caverns and streams of lava flowing being the most notable. There are several new creatures introduced, including giant frogs, cyclops, lava lizards, a new riding bird, and an alligator-like ice beastie. A further collection of existing UO beasties have made the transition, though with altered stats and abilities. The most interesting addition is the introduction of two new species - the Ophidians and the Terathans. One is based on serpents and the other on arachnids, each with certain class lev-

els and an age old feud. The potential for a new storyline is there for the taking. It's now up to Origin do the rest.

Major improvements

To reach this new land, the player must log onto Britannia first, then seek out one of several portals. The portals will be visible to regular UO players, however those without the Second



Age expansion pack installed on their system won't be able to access them. Travel between UO and the Second Age will apparently be penalty free.

As mentioned, The Second Age isn't just a pricey title with a new landmass and a few new creatures to hack and slash.. For the game engine, enhancements that most expected would have been available to be downloaded for free were too large to be distributed in that way. Hence the necessity for a whole new package.

Big screen mode
On the enhancement front, the most notable feature is Big Screen mode. UO can get awfully cluttered with your paper-doll on display, your spell book ready, your backpack opened and the skill list

brought up. Sections of the gameplay window become buried, which makes it that much harder to spot sneaky thieves or player killers on screen. With this new feature, Origin have shrunk the viewable game world area, and left two black "tile" sections on either side to work with, so you can arrange all the vital gameplay windows off the main screen.

Also included is an IRC-style chat program, which is run from within the game (there should be no need now to be hopping

between IRC/ICQ and UO that frequently). A new translation program will be included, which will (fingers crossed) break the language barrier that is so often encountered online. Other minor enhancements such as the *uo.cfg* system being replaced by a menu system may seem trivial, but really are a godsend.

Paper manuals, finally

And the thing most missed in the original UO package? A manual! A big fat manual. This time around Origin have included one, combining both the original game as well as the new features from the Second Age into one hefty tome.

Are the new enhancements enough to give Ultima Online an extended shelf life? Like always time will tell. Beta testing is currently under way and all reports suggest that it will be a necessary purchase if any long term enjoyment is expected from the UO experience. More details soon.

A dramatic, atmospheric scene of a sea at night or during a storm. The water is a deep, turbulent red, likely from a sunset or sunrise, with white foam along the shore and small whitecaps on the surface. The sky above is dark and filled with heavy, swirling clouds, some catching a faint blue light from the horizon.

...and the seas became as BLOOD.



PC
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MONOLITH
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www.the-chosen.com

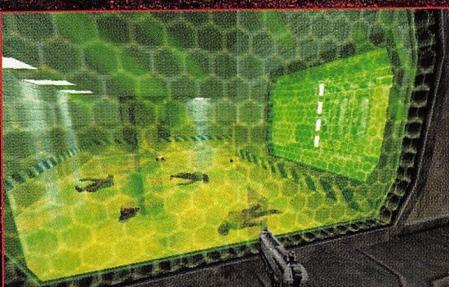


www.gtgames.com

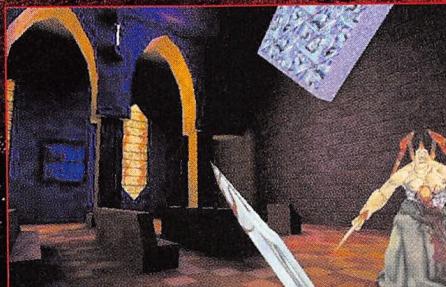
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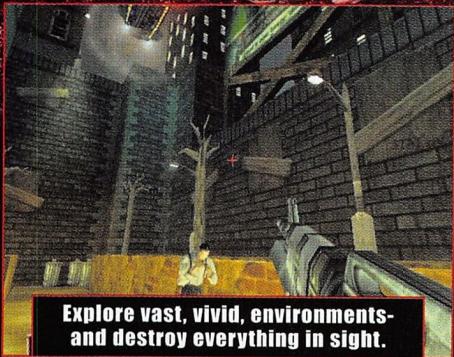


Run a savage gauntlet of multiplayer mayhem from Teamplay to Level Racing.

...and the seas became as BLOOD.

THE ^{BLOOD} II CHOSEN

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Four customisable, playable characters:
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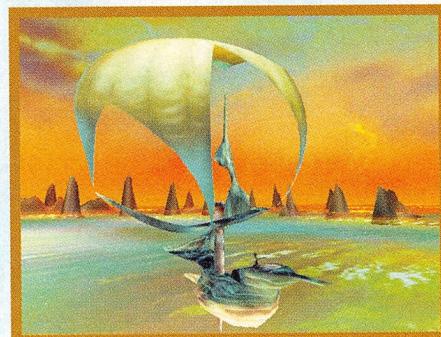
Flame Throwers, Tesla Cannons,
Voodoo Dolls and Humiliation Animations.

THEY MIGHT BE GIANTS

Tim Williams, Creative Director at Planet Moon Studios, talks with PowerPlay's Ed Dawson about Giants, and helps us reminisce about the mighty MDK.

Hi Tim, thanks for taking time out to talk with us.

Tim: You're welcome! I actually have some of my colleagues joining me today: Nick Brut (President), Bob Stevenson (VP and Artist) and Andy Astor (VP and Programmer).



If you think the Planet Moon lads sound weird and silly here, just wait until you check out their web page - www.planetmoon.com. Tres wacky!

Firstly, can you tell us a little bit about yourself and what your position involves at Planet Moon Studios?

Tim: I'm the Creative Director here at Planet Moon. This is a position that involves many things — anything from writing for our web site (www.planetmoon.com) to putting sound effects in the game. But the main thing for me is game design work — most of my time is spent concentrating on making this game absolutely original and exciting. Nick and Bob both deal with the art sides of things, along with game design as well, and Andy's the programmer.

Now that you have the incredible power of 3D acceleration at your disposal, do you have any technical tricks up your sleeves for Giants, in the same ground-breaking fashion?

Andy: Yes. The above statements still apply. Though flat shading is no longer an issue, it is still important for the artists to select when to use numbers of polygons and when to use large textures to produce the blend of performance and art. Our engine is still custom designed for the game and we'll implement non-standard graphical techniques to display unique visuals in the game.

The little info we have sucked out of our sources indicates that your upcoming game, "Giants" is an Action/Strategy game. Is that exactly correct?

Tim: These days I cringe at the description "Action/Strategy" because it has fast become overused, and many of these games seem rather uninspired. First and foremost I see this as an Action game, but we have purposely not tried to completely balance this with strategy. Simply put, Giants is an action game which unashamedly steps into the tranquil worlds of Strategy and RPG...then blows them to pieces!

The lines between action and strategy are blurring ever more these days, recently with titles such as Uprising, Battlezone and Urban Assault, with mixed success. Even earlier efforts like

the ancient and classic Magic Carpet had immersive 3D worlds with strategic components. How do you plan to merge these genres?

Tim: The root of the strategy in our game comes directly from the desire to keep it fast paced and exciting. I've noticed that other companies take a more literal approach to the Action/Strategy genre. They come up with strategy elements which bog the whole game down. As I said, Giants will allow the player to concentrate on having fun and playing a fast-paced action game. All this, while the strategy and RPG elements happen around him.

We really like the Sea Reapers. The way they cast natural disasters like full-scale typhoons against their foes is very endearing. Do they have any weapons involving Fish?

Nick: Do they! The Reapers are not natural sea dwellers. Forced from the land by the newly sentient Kabuto, they struggle for survival against fickle sea monsters and irritated fish, not to mention a bad case of crabs. However, your natural progression through the levels will leave you with a good handful of spells capable of penetrating the egg-shell-like minds of these very same creatures, submitting their will to yours.

Are you expecting to get in trouble over the Sea Reapers carefree and "Tropical" choice of apparel?

Bob: After showing Delphi (Leader of the Sea Reapers) to many women at E3 and ECTS, I didn't get any slaps in the face. In fact the reaction was very pro "Carefree". They also appreciated that we didn't give her watermelon-sized breasts.

Will you incorporate a censorship setting (with some well-placed rendered coconuts) for the concerned old-fashioned parents who might be buying the game?

If there are certain countries that object to her liberated attire then I suppose we could opt for the old "coconut" trick. Or maybe we'll just cover her breasts with fake plastic breasts.

The Rise of Rome took 520 years.*
*Your results may vary.



Presenting the Age of Empires® Expansion: The Rise of Rome.



Age of Empires is now going where you always wanted it to go: Rome. In addition to the Roman Empire, this official Expansion Pack also includes the legendary civilisations of Palmyra, Hellenes, and Carthage, each with their own strengths and weaknesses. Test your mettle with new units like the crafty Camel Rider, powerful Scythe Chariot, fearless Slinger,

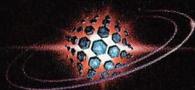


and punishing Fire Galley—all on new and challenging maps. Plus, this highly anticipated Expansion Pack features four new campaigns and production queues to carefully plan your historic civilisation's growth. So visit www.microsoft.com/games/aoeexpansion and start extending Age of Empires into a new era of world domination.



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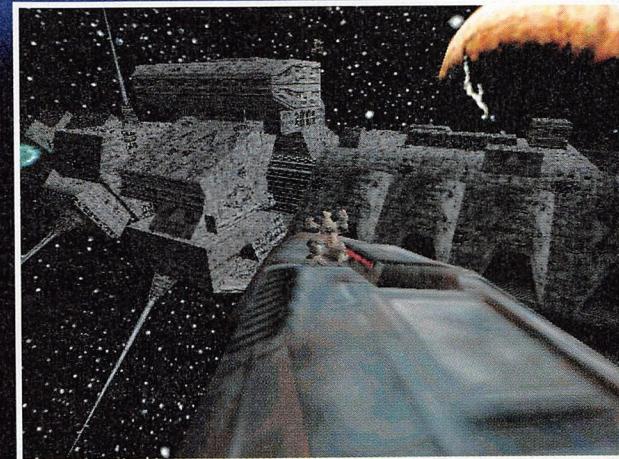
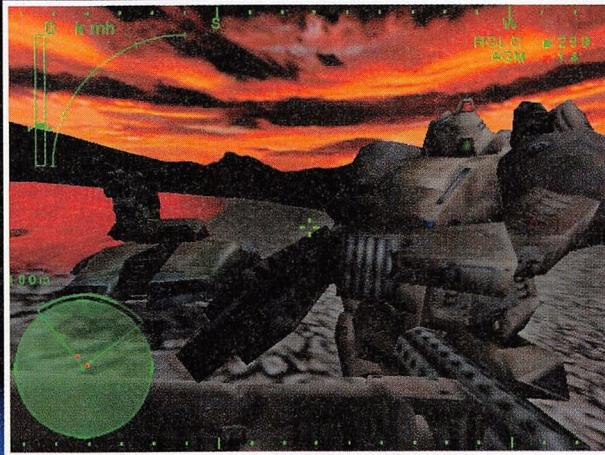
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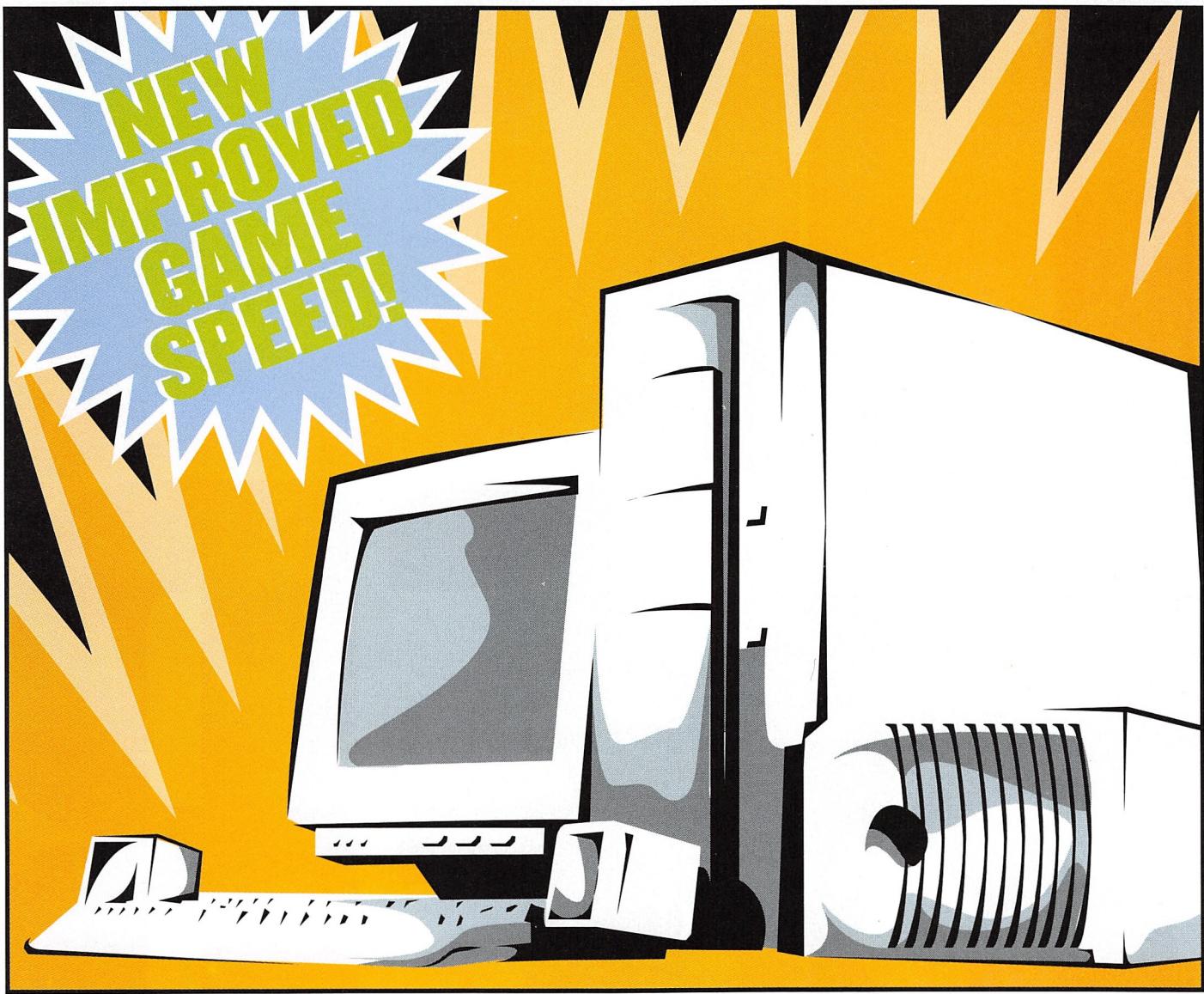
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A TALE OF 2 PCs

A Budget-Box and a Beast. Both game-able. All that matters now is how rich you are...

Le's face it: it's time you upgraded. The whole situation has gone beyond a joke. Unreal is a slideshow on your P133, and you turn to the system requirements on game boxes with fear and trepidation - and usually dismay. So, you steel your resolve and hide away parts of your pay packet/Dole cheque/Astuday allowance/pocket money each fortnight, dreaming of the day when you can afford to upgrade.

When you get to the stage where it looks feasible to buy a whole brand spanking new gaming machine, you turn to the classifieds section of your newspaper. Ads everywhere! All offering the best, promising the earth, the guaranteed best prices, the best equipment, and everything else possible. Gradually, though, a picture begins to emerge of what you want (or, more likely, what you can afford). So off you

trot to a few dealers to get some advice and view the merchandise first-hand.

Death by Retail

"No way!" says Sleazy Merchant #1, "you don't need that! We don't stock Product A anyway!". He smiles glibly and moves to Product B "Now this, this is what you want. It's got 44 Quadraloops of power, can dance the Cha Cha and fix a lovely cup of tea too, all while dispensing handy fashion tips". So you're thinking, 'wow, that looks cool. I'll be getting me one of those!' But there's another store across the road, and you drop in just for a quick look on your way to the ATM...

"No way! You don't want that!" says Sleazy Merchant #2 "We don't stock Product B anyway, it's crap!". He smiles glibly. "Now this, this is what you want" he says, proudly pointing to Product C. More technical details

follow, leaving you thoroughly confused. So you go visit Sleazy Merchant #3, who proceeds to denigrate both Products B and C in favour of Product A. By the end of the whole thing, you just want to curl up in a corner and beat yourself with a stick. And that's just one component, you haven't even begun to ask about the other pieces, or even tried to assess the merits of the pre-built systems they all offer. What do you do? Give up, go home, and forget the whole computer games thing? Not likely!

PCPP to the rescue

Now, we don't have the easy answers (we'll leave that to the pollies), but we can help you out with a guide to buying your new PC, whether you're after your first gaming system on a limited budget or you want the latest whizz bang techo gear (and can afford it).

PART 1: THE BUDGET GAMER

First up is the budget gamer, and as much as we hate to admit it, this is where most of us fit in (unless you've all been lying on your survey forms), and though the specifications we've outlined will set you back a little more than many pre-built clone systems you'll be sure that you're getting good quality merchandise for a reasonable price. Feel free to deviate from our recommendations according to your needs or budget, but rest assured that the products we've listed all have our 'GoodGaming' stamp of approval.

[Note: all prices quoted below are estimates only. Retail prices will vary from these figures, substantially in some cases]

CASE \$50-80

What: Midi Tower/Mid Tower

Why: Middle sized tower cases aren't very expensive, leave you room inside the case for when you need to add or remove devices, and offer more ventilation for your equipment. If you really want to, you can save 20 bucks or so by buying a Mini Tower, but we don't recommend this - cases are phallic symbols, after all.

Which: It doesn't really matter which brand, just pick a pretty one, really.
What to look out for: Make sure that your motherboard will fit in the case - don't buy a Mini Tower if you get an ATX sized mainboard.

MOTHERBOARD \$170-180

What: We think that you'll get the most bang for your buck with a Super 7 Motherboard.

Recommended model: EpoX Super 7 EP58MVP3

Why: They're relatively cheap, will run the 100MHz BUS, have an AGP slot, and use PC100 SDRAM.

What to look out for: Whichever type of motherboard you decide upon, try to get one that comes with a CPU setup program in the BIOS rather than manually set jumpers. Also, make sure that there are enough PCI and ISA slots to fulfil your needs.

CPU \$300-\$320

What: AMD K6-2 300MHz (or thereabouts)

Why: The K6-2 is a gamers CPU, it's designed to run on a 100MHz BUS, it's cheap, and it's fast. Perfect! If you do choose to go with a BX Motherboard rather than a Super 7, then we'd heartily recommend the Celeron 300A chips (the ones with the 128k cache), for the same reasons.

What to look out for: Just make sure that you shop around for prices, as they change regularly and vary wildly between retailers. Always buy from a reputable source though, it's in your best interests in the long run.

RAM \$180-\$200

What: 64MB SDRAM (8ns 100MHz rated)

Why: Most store-built systems will come with 32MB RAM standard. This really isn't

enough for a gaming system. In fact, 64MB is only just enough. Trust us, you'll need it, and RAM isn't that expensive at the moment. **What to look out for:** Make sure that you're getting PC100 rated RAM. It costs about \$10 more per 16MB, but the cheaper RAM won't work with your 100MHz BUS system. Also beware of worryingly cheap RAM, there are some dodgy dealers out there that will try to sell second-hand RAM as new.

MONITOR \$300-\$400

What: 15" Monitor

Why: The monitor is one of the most expensive components in your computer, and though we'd all love dearly to have a nice fat 17 incher (at least) sitting in front of us, for a budget PC they're just a bit too expensive. A decent 15" monitor is your best bet, and you can always upgrade to a 17" a few months down the track when you've saved up a few more bucks.

Recommended Brands:

Acer, Viewsonic, Magtron, DiamondView, Sony.

What to look out for: Always check the maximum resolutions, refresh rates (the higher the better), and dot pitch (smaller is better). As always, the more established brands will have better manufacturer warranties, in case something goes wrong in the future.

VIDEO 2D/3D: \$170

What: Intel i740 AGP

Why: If you're looking for a good, cheap 2D/3D combo card, it's very hard to go past the i740 range. There may be cheaper combo cards out there, but they won't match up to the i740 in terms of performance. A separate Voodoo2 card would be nice, but it's another item that might have to be put off for a few months due to cost - the i740 alone will satisfy your needs until then.

Recommended Brands: Real 3D Starfighter, Diamond Stealth II G460

Other Video Solutions: Riva ZX, Diamond Viper 330

HARD DRIVE: \$250-\$300

What: At least 3GB EIDE

Why: You will need at least 3GB of space to store your games and applications as well as your OS (probably Win95/98).

Recommended Brands: IBM, Quantum, Western Digital, Fujitsu, Seagate

What to look out for: You're going to want an Ultra DMA (or UDMA, or UDMA33) drive if at all possible, but check to make sure that

your motherboard and BIOS supports it. There's a lot of talk from manufacturers about seek times, access times and transfer rates - always take these figures with a grain of salt.

CD-ROM \$100-130

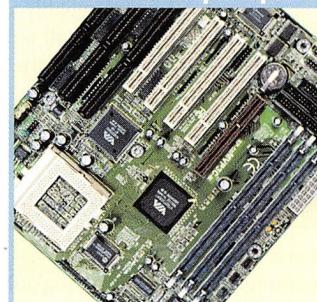
What: Anywhere around a 24X IDE drive will be fine

Why: CD-ROM's are dirt cheap at the moment, and you shouldn't need to spend more money on a 32X or 40X drive - you won't see much difference in data transfer rates at all.

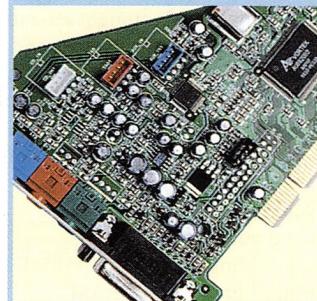
Recommended Brands: Creative, Sony, Acer

What to look out for: As with Hard Drives, most manufacturers (and salespeople) will try to confuse you with talk of transfer rates, seek times, and access rates. In reality, there really isn't that much difference.

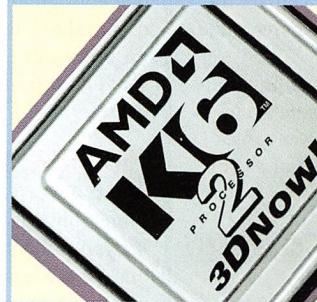
MOTHERBOARD: EpoX Super7



SOUNDCARD: Aureal A3D



CPU: AMD K6-2



and it may happen again. Shop around to make sure you're getting the best deal.

NETWORK CARD \$40-\$50

What: NE2000 PNP Network card

Why: The two crucial aspects are to get a PNP card and to make sure that it is NE2000 compatible. You don't want to have to screw around with jumpers to set IRQ's and the like, and Windows usually loves NE2000 compatible cards, which makes setting them

up a breeze. PCI cards are preferable, but if you're running short on PCI slots then an ISA card will do fine.

What to look out for: Make sure that you get terminators and a T-Junction with your card, and you will probably also want to get some cabling too - it's only \$5 or so for a decent length.

MODEM \$200-\$250

What: 56k best, 33.6k will do

Why: If you do decide upon a 56k modem, make sure that your ISP supports it, otherwise it's a waste of money. A 33.6k modem will offer much the same performance (56k is only for downloads, and you will never actually achieve a transfer rate this high anyway) for a better price. Probably best to go for a 33.6k modem unless you see a good deal for a 56k

Recommended Brands: Banksia, Netcomm, USRobotics, Hayes

What to look out for: Make absolutely positively sure that the modem has a tick on the

box to signify that it complies with Australian Telecommunications standards.

Gaming Devices

FERRARO ADVANTAGE WHEEL \$400

Simply the best there is, and competitively priced too. If you're into driving games at all this is a very worthy buy

MICROSOFT SIDEWINDER GAMEPAD \$80

At the very least you'll need a gamepad of some sort, and Microsoft's Sidewinder is easily the best. There is also the Freestyle Pro, but it's fairly pricey, and the Sidewinder will do the job.

THRUSTMASTER X-FIGHTER \$125

There are thousands of joysticks out there, many of which are much cheaper. However, they won't perform nearly as well or as reliably as the Thrustmaster. They're the best all purpose joystick you can get, and worth the price tag.

THE EXTRAS

\$100-\$150

You will, of course, need a keyboard and mouse. The general rule of thumb is that these are the two most physically used components of your system, so it's worth shelling out a little extra for decent quality. Don't ever get a \$15 mouse and think that it's going to last you more than 4 or 5 months, instead get a Logitech or Microsoft Mouse. There's a reason that they cost more - it's because they're better.

Conclusion

So there you go, a powerful system for around \$2500 total. A system of this nature will cost a little more than many of the store assembled systems, but this way you get known, high quality components all around. It's not the absolute top end, but a computer like this will run any game you care to mention, both for now and into the foreseeable future.

PART 2: THE POWER USER

The budget system is all well and good, but if you want maximum gaming performance and you've got a little extra cash available then you're going to be after something with serious grunt, something that makes your friends say 'that's siiiiiiiiick maaate' when they look at your beautiful baby. Here's what we recommend, then;

CASE: \$100

What: Full Tower

Why: Space, space and space. If you're a power user, you're going to be in and out of the insides of your system regularly, adding in new bits and bobs, tweaking things here and there. A Full Tower, or at least a Midi Tower is what you want. And, of course, the phallicity of the object cannot be disregarded.

Recommended Brands: Macase

What to look out for: Same as with the budget model, just make sure that there's adequate ventilation and that the power cables are plentiful enough and reach as far as you will need them to.

MOTHERBOARD: \$280-\$350

What: BX

Why: BX is where it's at, without a doubt. It's the best Motherboard you can get right now.

Recommended brands: ABit BH6 (highly recommended), AOpen AX6B, Asus P2B

What to look out for: There's new motherboards coming out all the time, so keep an eye on these pages each month to see what's new and if it measures up. Also, if you have access to the internet, www.anandtech.com and www.tomshardware.com are also well worth a visit for their motherboard and chipset comparisons.

CPU: \$800-\$1000

What: P2-400MHz

Why: If you have the cash, you could go for a Xeon (P2-450 with up to 2MB cache) or straight P2-450MHz, but they're extremely expensive, and in terms of price for performance the 400MHz is probably your best bet.

What to look out for: As always, shop around for the best price, as different retailers will vary quite a bit.

RAM: \$380-\$420

What: 128MB PC-100 rated SDRAM

Why: 64MB is really only just enough to get by nowadays. 128MB will be enough for every game out now, and for at least 6 months into the future.

MONITOR: \$1000-\$3500

What: At least a 17 inch, preferably larger

Why: A difficult decision, this one. At the least, you'll be wanting a 17" monitor, but a 19" (or upwards) viewscreen would be the showpiece of the entire system.

Unfortunately, the jump in price from a 17" to a 19" (and above) is hefty indeed. Suffice to say that bigger is always better, but it's also much more expensive.

Recommended Brands: Sony, NEC, Viewsonic, Acer

What to look out for: Always check the

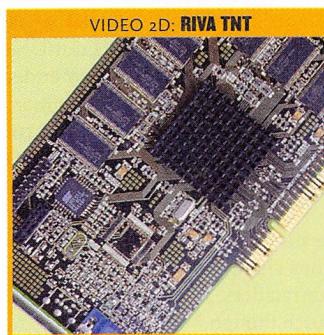
refresh rates and maximum resolutions for the monitor (higher is better in both cases), and also the dot pitch (smaller is better, anything less than 0.26 is good)

VIDEO 2D: \$300-450

What: RIVA TNT AGP, Voodoo Banshee AGP, Matrox G200

Why: The recently released RIVA TNT definitely has the goods, it offers great 2D performance along with very impressive 3D to boot. It is one of the more expensive cards, retailing for around \$450-ish. The Voodoo Banshee is a very decent 2D card, and also has decent 3D too, and at \$300-ish it's an attractive deal. The Matrox is similarly priced, and it's certainly one of the best in the market.

What to look out for: Most video cards these days offer some software along with the card, whether this be games or applications. Have a look around at the different packages offered and try to get one that suits you best (i.e. It's pointless getting a package with three full versions of games that you already own).



VIDEO 3D: \$450-\$500

What: 12MB Voodoo2

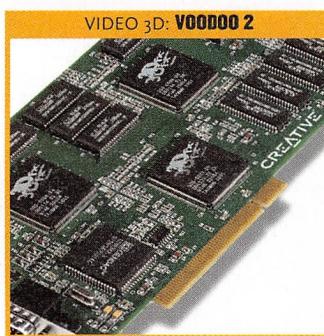
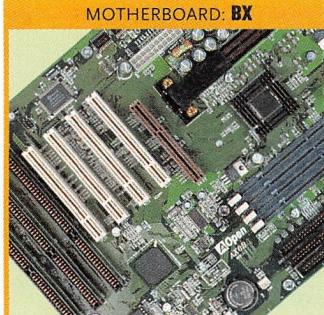
Why: Despite the growing amount of 2D/3D combo cards around, we're still going to rec-

ommend a separate 3D card, because the Voodoo2 can't be beaten for performance and you can always add a second Voodoo2 as an easy and potent upgrade later. An indispensable part of any serious gaming system.

Recommended Brands:

Canopus, Maxi Gamer, Diamond, Creative, Metabyte

What to look out for: As with 2D cards, most Voodoo2's come with software packages. Shop around a little and you should be able to find one to satisfy your needs.



HARD DRIVE: \$400-500

What: 8GB UDMA

Why: "No SCSI!" we hear you cry. Nope, SCSI is just a little too expensive when you consider that a SCSI controller card is also required, totalling at least \$1000 for a similar 8GB solution. With Ultra DMA (or UDMA, or UDMA33) drives you'll still get some rather fast transfer rates but at a much more attractive price. And 8GB might seem like a lot, but you will use it all if it's there.

Recommended Brands: IBM, Quantum, Fujitsu, Western Digital

What to look out for: There's no reason to get one single drive, so if you find two 4GB drives on offer cheaply, then snap them up. There's no real need for the two drives to be identical (brand-wise or size-wise) either, it doesn't make any difference.

CD: \$100-\$150

What: 24x CD-ROM

Why: Standard CD-ROM drives will do the job for you, again anything above a 24x will suffice.

Things to look out for: If you are thinking about DVD, then there are a few things you might like to consider. Firstly, it just hasn't taken off in Australia yet. Indications are that the DVD standard is growing in popularity, but do you really need it now? Second thing is the advent of DVD-RAM drives, which will be able to write (and rewrite) to DVD disks, read DVD disks, as well as all the standard CD formats. They aren't readily available yet, and they're going to start out being very expensive, so it makes sense to wait a while before going to DVD, we think.

SOUND: \$499

What: Sound Blaster Live!

Why: The SB Live! is an awesome card, whether you're a professional sound artist or just love hearing crisp, clear, hi-fidelity sound. It's not cheap, but you get what you pay for.

Things to look out for: Er, not a lot really. The SB Live! kits are selling hot at the moment, so

you should be able to find a store or two selling them at a special low price.

SPEAKERS: \$499

What: Cambridge PC Works 4 Point Surround

Why: Cambridge is the best, there's no doubt about it. Around \$500 is a lot to pay for speakers, but you'll be getting sound quality usually only found in much higher priced speaker sets. The tiny satellite speakers take up almost no space at all, perfect for an often cluttered computer desk.

NETWORK CARD: \$40-60

What: PCI NE2000 compatible PNP

Why: Exactly the same as the budget model - no need to get anything flash as you

won't see all that much difference between models.

What to look out for: As long as the card is PNP and doesn't require you to manually set jumpers, you're set. You'll also want to make sure that it has connections for both BNC and RJ-45 (telephone plug style) cables.

MODEM: \$200-250

What: 56k best, 33.6 will do

Why: As with the budget model, 56k modems are worthy if you can find a decent one at a decent price, but there's no need to discount a 33.6k modem out of hand. 56k really isn't that much faster in most cases.

Recommended Brands:

Banksia, Hayes, Netcomm, US Robotics (USR)

Gaming Devices

MICROSOFT FREESTYLE PRO \$130

There's enough buttons for whatever type of game you're playing, and once you get the hang of the movement you'll never look back. The MS Sidewinder Gamepad is also an option, and at 80-odd bucks is cheaper too, but the Freestyle is great.

THRUSTMASTER X-FIGHTER \$125

There are thousands of joysticks out there, many of which are much cheaper. However, they won't perform

nearly as well or as reliably as the Thrustmaster. They're the best all purpose joystick you can get, and worth the price tag.

MS SIDEWINDER PRO DIGITAL \$130

Microsoft have learnt how to make joysticks very quickly, and if you're after a good and versatile stick suitable for a number of games this is definitely worth considering.

FERRARO ADVANTAGE WHEEL \$400

Simply the best there is, and competitively priced too. If you're into driving games at all this is a very worthy buy.

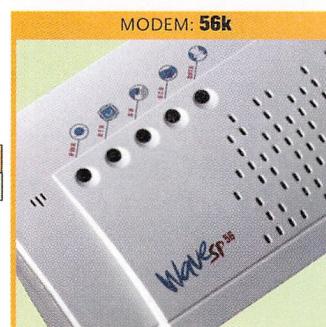
Extras

An extra cooling fan for your tower is highly recommended, just because it keeps the air circulating around inside your machine, thereby moving the hot air away from the devices that heat up, like video cards and CPU's. You'll also need a mouse and keyboard, of course. Don't look past the 'wheel' mice because they look gimmicky, they're actually very handy, both for scrolling in web pages and word processors, but also (and more importantly) they're great for use as 'next weapon' and 'previous weapon' keys. Both Logitech and Microsoft have great 'wheel' mice available.

Keyboards...you'll be very hard pushed to find a non-Win95 keyboard around, but if you can, snap it up. Other than that, just make sure you do some test typing before you buy to make sure it feels comfortable for you. And then take it home and remove the Windows keys with a butter knife....

Conclusion

So that's the power gaming machine. Sure, it's going to set you back around \$5000 (or more), but if you can afford it this will give you no end of pleasure. Every game will run as smooth as a baby's botty, the components are all top of the line, and unless you've got an all but unlimited budget, this is as good as you can get. Of course, "as good as you can get" usually lasts around six months in the unpredictable computer industry, but there have been some big technological leaps lately that mean you'll be secure in the knowledge that another upgrade is a long way off.



PART 3: INSTALLATION GUIDE

If you do choose to buy your components separately and install them yourself, you might find yourself a bit worried about the physical installation. There's an awful lot of screws, slots and plugs to deal with. And then there's all those cautionary tales about people blowing up their motherboards by wiring it incorrectly, or shorting out circuits because their bodies were statically charged with electricity when they held their components. It has happened (it's actually happened to me - and it's one of the most annoying things that can ever happen to you, trust me). However, assembling your system yourself is a practice that we actively encourage, for a number of reasons. Firstly, you get to know your system better - you bond with it, if you will. There's no better way to become familiar with the insides of your computer, the way things work, than by finding out by doing it yourself. If you are attempting a 'build' for the first time, then you do need to be very cautious - and it's also heartily recommended that you have a more experienced, more technically oriented person nearby, for advice and security.

Now, there's some basic steps to follow to ensure that you're not going to wreck the whole thing. Firstly, you'll need a large clearly lit space in which to work. If this means that you finally clean your room for the first time in 6 months, then so be it, I'm afraid. Next you'll want to lay out all your components within easy reach, making sure that you have enough screws to go around. Every so often, and especially at first you'll want to de-static yourself. Simply touch the power section of the motherboard with any hand to

do so. Then, once you have a phillips head screwdriver handy, the first thing to do is secure your motherboard to the case.

STEP 1 Secure the Motherboard

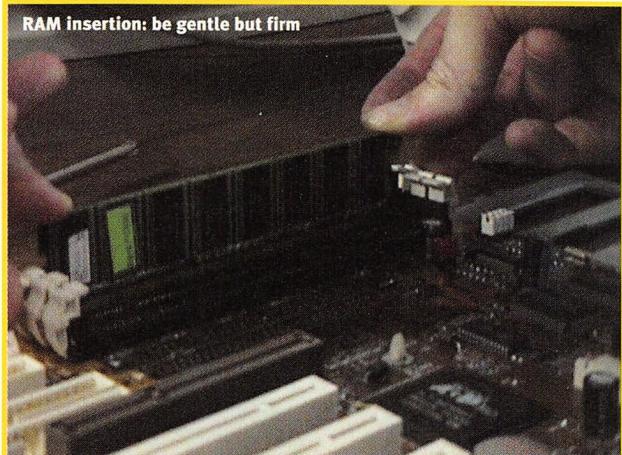
This is a fairly taxing task, but it's probably the most fiddly part of the whole thing. Firstly, you're going to want to remove the side-board from the case so as to allow you access. Carefully remove the screws that hold in the backboard for the case. Depending upon what type of case you have, you'll either find metal or plastic 'stand offs'. Standoffs are clips that secure your motherboard to the backing plate (along with standard screws). It really is a good idea to read through the motherboard manual, at least briefly, before you begin just so that you are at least vaguely acquainted with what's supposed to go where. If you need to set jumpers for the CPU or whatever, it's easiest to do so before the board goes into the case - much less fiddly that way. Beware - it's not a good idea at all to overclock your chip the first time. Initially, you should set the chip to run in a stock standard fashion. Once everything is up and running, then if you're so inclined you can mess around with overclocking, but not before. When the jumpers are set and you've read through the manual, you should proceed and attach the motherboard to the backing plate. Simply pop the standoffs through the holes and slide it gently into position, and then secure by using screws in the appropriate positions.

STEP 2: Mount the CPU

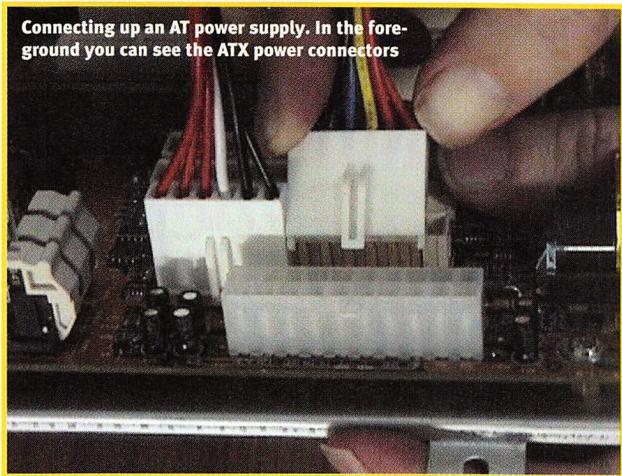
For those of you with dirty minds, congratulations, you're just like us (It makes us giggle too). However, all we're going to do is pop the CPU into its rightful position.

For Socket 7 motherboards, first make sure that the pins on the chip haven't become bent at any stage. If they have, you can try to very carefully bend them back, but we'd recommend taking it back to the store and asking for a new one. Ready your motherboard for the insertion of the CPU by lifting the lever next to the ZIF socket, pushing gently outwards and

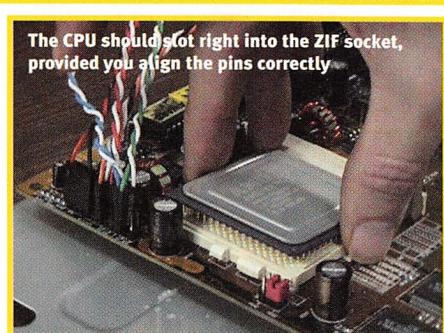
RAM insertion: be gentle but firm



Connecting up an AT power supply. In the foreground you can see the ATX power connectors



The CPU should slot right into the ZIF socket, provided you align the pins correctly



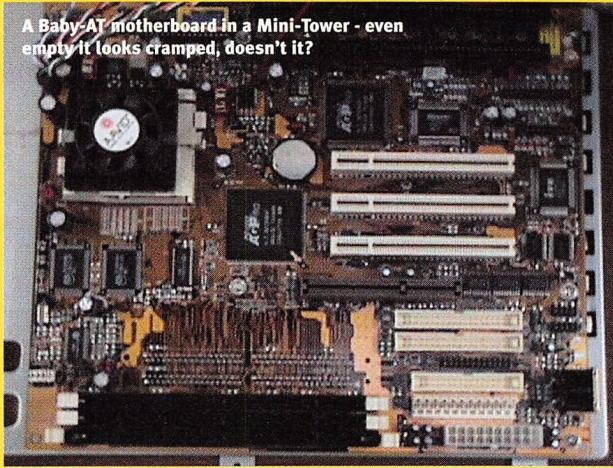
upwards. Take a look at the underside of the chip and you will notice that one corner is short one pin. Align this corner up with the corner on the ZIF socket that is the same, and gently insert the chip into position. Then pop the lever back down until it clicks, and you're done. Next is the cooling fan, and for this you simply place the fan over the top of the chip, then click the holders into position. Easy!

For Pentium 2 (or Slot 1) Motherboards and chips, the process is even less painful. The heatsink should already be attached to the CPU, so all that's required is to insert the chip into the holding brackets. It can only go in one way, so if you're having trouble fitting the chip in, try things the other way around.

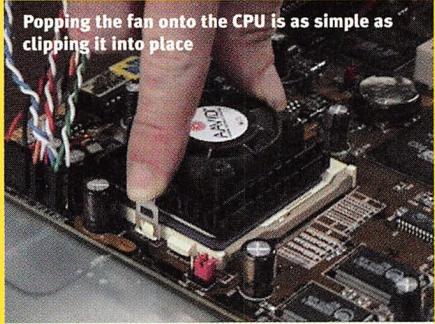
STEP 3: Inserting RAM

Back in the days of SIMM slots, inserting new or more memory into your PC was a haz-

A Baby-AT motherboard in a Mini-Tower - even empty it looks cramped, doesn't it?



Popping the fan onto the CPU is as simple as clipping it into place



Some cry because of the challenging gameplay. Others cry for their enslaved brothers.

But most Mudokons cry because electrodes are attached to their tear glands, stimulating the ingredients for SoulStorm Brew, the best-selling nauseating elixir from SoulStorm Brewery.

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Tougher challenges. Deadlier farts.

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ardous task. Not so now with DIMM slots, as things are much easier. There's no sliding of RAM from a 45 degree angle to an upright position, the RAM is now simply inserted into the top of the slot at a 90 degree angle to the motherboard, slotting into position with application of some downward force. Some DIMM slots can be a bit tough, so don't worry about applying a bit of force to get them into the correct position. Make sure though, that the RAM is aligned properly. Each DIMM module has three interface points of different lengths, so make sure that you are trying to insert the RAM in the slot that lines up with the appropriate length. Generally, the RAM faces in towards the Motherboard, but this is not always the case.

STEP 4: Give it power

Next step is to secure the power cables to your Motherboard. If it's possible, it's best to do this before you attach the motherboard to the case, but this won't always be possible. There are two types of power supplies - AT-X or AT. Most modern cases will come equipped with power supplies that utilise the AT-X connector, and most motherboards will also use this. Consult the motherboard manual for information on what your motherboard comes with and where it should go. Basically, an AT-X power supply has a single 20-pin block, whereas AT power uses 2 separate 5-pin connectors. With AT power cables,

the two black cables should be placed next to each other, otherwise the motherboard will essentially blow up. With AT-X power, there's only one way to insert the cable, so you shouldn't have too much trouble here. Next, if your motherboard has a separate 3 pin connector for power to the CPU fan, attach this, and then once this has been accomplished, attach your motherboard to the case (if you haven't done so already).

STEP 5: Testing

It's not essential, but it's still a very good idea to check that things are working as they should be at this stage. You will need to insert your video card by slotting it in to either the PCI or AGP slot (depending on what type of video card you have), and connecting your monitor cable to the output port. Also, plug in your keyboard as well, you might need it. Then connect the power to your system and turn it on. You should see the BIOS kick in, eventually (it may take up to 30 seconds the first time). If it does, you've just accomplished the hardest part of installing your system. Well done! Now remove the power cable from the back of the case, so as to avoid any accidents whilst you install everything else.

STEP 6: Devices

Now it's time to install your hard drives, floppy drive and CD-ROM/DVD. If you're using IDE channels for your HDD and CD/DVD, then you'll probably need to set their master/slave status. In the documentation that came with the drives or on the drives themselves you'll find information on how to set your drives as you need them. If you only have one CD-ROM and one Hard Drive, then it's best to use both of the IDE channels available, with the HDD and CD set as master on each channel. First you will need to install the drives physically. Just gently slide the Hard drive into the bay on the lowest rung. Screw it in place securely, using two screws for each side. Next attach your floppy drive (you may need to remove a slot on the front of the case for this) in the same way. Then remove the slot at the top of the case to make room for your CD-ROM, and slide it in. Time to connect them up.

First, the Hard Drive (we'll presume that you have one single hard drive and a single CD-ROM). The first step is to attach the power

cable. Find the cable with one normal power connector, and one smaller 4-pin connector (for the floppy). Attach the normal cable to the slot on the hard drive (there's only one way it will fit), and the 4-pin power supply to the floppy drive (again, it will only fit one way). Next, you'll want to attach the IDE cable to your hard drive. You'll see in the motherboard manual where the IDE interfaces are on the motherboard, locate them and take note of where 'pin 1' is (it will either be noted on the motherboard or in the manual). The red stripe on the IDE cable always goes on the same side as pin 1, so just carefully place the cable into the slot. The other end, of course, goes into your hard drive. For hard drives and CD-ROM's the red stripe always lines up next to the power cable, though floppy drives usually have a nice big 'pin 1' sign for where the red stripe should be. Follow the same procedure for your CD-ROM, using the secondary channel interface.

You will also have a floppy drive cable, which is slightly smaller than the IDE cable. Attach the non-twisted end to the motherboard in the floppy port, and the end with a twist in it to your floppy drive.

STEP 7: Dealing out the cards

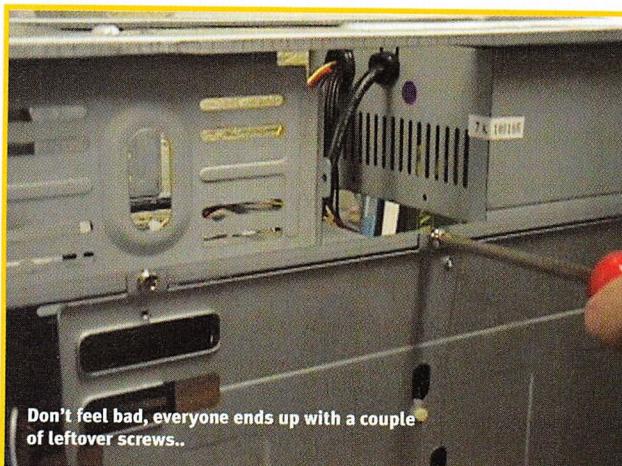
Pretty much all that's left to do (apart from installing your software, which is another chapter in itself), is inserting your various cards. This, really, is as simple as it gets. All you need to do is remove the back coverings for the slots you will be using and insert the cards gently but firmly into their slots. Place the cards where you can keep as much space in between them as possible.

Once this is done, you just need to connect the CD-Audio cable to your sound card (or possibly motherboard). Your CD will have come with an audio cable (often grey in colour), one end goes in to the slot on the CD, and the other into the CD-Audio slot on your sound card. The slots are usually clearly marked, but check your manual if you can't see it.

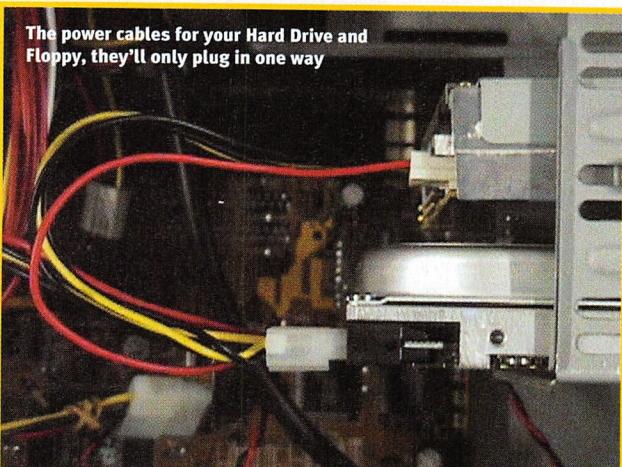
SUMMARY

Well, there you go. Hopefully you haven't run into too many troubles along the way. If you do find yourself stuck at some point, please don't try to force things in, or throw your expensive equipment against the wall in frustration. Call up your techy friends and whinge at them until they come to help you out - at least then you'll have someone to blame.

And always try and remember that if you had bought a pre-built system you'd probably have no idea what was inside your case. This way, you should be feeling comfortable with your toy, and be beginning to understand it. If so, congratulations! You're on your way to becoming a bona-fide geek!



Don't feel bad, everyone ends up with a couple of leftover screws..



The power cables for your Hard Drive and Floppy, they'll only plug in one way



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ridiculously
accurate
to just plain
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You may not require the absolute accuracy of Sony's Platinum Series monitors, but now you can enjoy the brilliance of Trinitron technology at every level. Both Sony Gold and Elite Series displays benefit from state of the art Platinum design, to give you the best combination of performance and price in their class. So even if you don't need the ultimate, you can still have the best. Call 1 800 226 429 or visit www.sony.com.au for more information. **It's a Sony.**

SONY

WHAT'S HOT

Ball gazing.

Crystal, that is.

Adventure/RPG

David Wildgoose

Biggest news is that *Grim Fandango* should be out, in the States at least, by the time you read this - March. S. is practising his Mexican accent even as I type. Following shortly after in November will be the Sierra duo of *Mask Of Eternity* (or *King's Quest 8*) and *Quest For Glory V* - both games continuing the exciting trend of 3D adventuring. Interplay also have two titles earmarked for a pre-Christmas release. *Fallout 2* will satisfy fans of the first game, while *Baldur's Gate*, after suffering countless delays, ought to be massive (judging from a brief glimpse I had of the beta version - though it was still hugely unstable).

The always reliable Legend have the mystery/horror of *The Blackstone Chronicles*



ready to roll and Looking Glass are applying the finishing touches to the now sadly multi-player-less *Thief: The Dark Project*. Just sneaking in on Xmas day (apparently) is *Grimoire* - though I would remind you it was meant to be out October 97!

The third instalment of the *Gabriel Knight* series has been put back until the 1st week of January and is sure to be joined by several others whose release dates were perhaps a touch optimistic. Promising isometric RPG, *The Lady, The Mage & The Knight*, from Attic will probably be one to join the latecomers. Also, the epic *Return To Krontor*, Westwood's *Lands Of Lore 3* and Infogrames' *Outcast* all likely candidates to emerge early next year. Other strugglers include *Swords & Sorcery* (caught in the EA/Virgin upheaval) and *Wizardry 8* (in doubt after Sir-Tech's recent demise).

Despite having no firm release date, *Anachronox* is still looking like a contender for the greatest game ever (or my dream game, which I reckon is the same thing). Why? Non-linear plot, dynamic third-person views, turn-based combat, loads of dialogue, Quake 2 engine, need I go on?

Tex Murphy: Polarity and *Discworld Noir* are both destined to please someone, as will Sierra's purchase of the rights to *Tolkien's Middle Earth*. All three games are quite a long way off, however. To end, though, I'll just leave you these few words - *System Shock 2...*

Action

George Argy

Current Game Versions:

Doom Legacy: 1.25
QuakeWorld: 2.30
Quake2: 3.19
Unreal: 2.17

It seems the 3D gaming scene has gone a little bizarre this month. Monolith's *Shogo* came out ahead of schedule with little marketing hype for one (and is also pretty bloody good, with smooth internet play).

Even more bizarre is the Doppelganger effect. To explain: a 3D game is announced with an 'original' theme, and a few days later another game with a strangely similar theme is announced by a different publisher. Take *Rainbow 6* and the recently announced *Delta Force* (not to mention a stack of other mis-

Shogo Mobile Police



sion-based 3D shooters). Then there's *Kingpin* and Ice Pick's *Bank Heist*, both 3D shooters where you get to play the bad guy - either as a crime boss in Kingpin or a bank robber in Bank Heist (naturally).

But the weirdest clones would have to be *Trespasser* and *Carnivores*. Trespasser basically picks up where the Jurassic Park - Lost World movie left off. You're back at Site B exploring the abandoned genetic engineering experiment gone wrong. Carnivores, however, is set in the future where you travel to another planet populated by dinosaurs, and your sole objective is to hunt them for sport. Speaking of dinosaurs, the hot rumour is that *Turok 2* will be out in November for the PC and N64.

Before Epic have done a decent job of cleaning up the messy network code in Unreal, they have announced that there are firm plans for *Unreal 2*, although Epic will probably not develop the title. I'm not sure if announcing something like this is going to win Epic any friends, because most gamers only want to hear one thing coming from the mouths of anyone at Epic - Unreal network play is finally acceptable, not the slide-show circus we have to contend with at the moment.

An Unreal-engined game called *Hired Guns* has also been announced by developers Devil's Thumb entertainment. They too have fallen prey to the mysterious sister-game situation as their game will also have you manage four characters on-screen at one time.

Strategy

Brett Robinson

Current Game Versions:

Total Annihilation: 3.1c

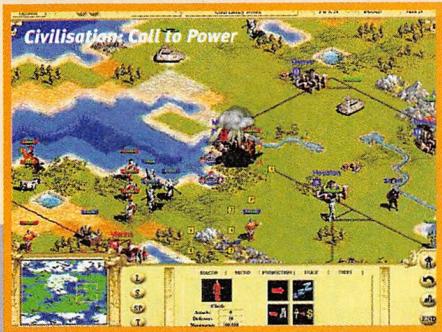
Dark Reign: 1.4

Starcraft: 1.03

Age of Empires: 1.0b

1998 is proving to be a very busy time for strategy game developers, with some putting the finishing touches on their products, and many more gearing up for several months of gruelling programming and testing.

Microsoft's *Rise of Rome* expansion pack for the phenomenally successful *Age of Empires* is nearing completion. Rather than requiring players to own copies of the original game, *Rise of Rome* will be sold as a stand alone title. Designed to bridge the historical



gap between AoE and its sequel (AoE2), *Rise of Rome* will introduce three new civilisations: Rome, Carthage and Palmyra. With a release date of mid November, *Rise of Rome* will be welcomed with open arms by gamers keen to get a fix of AoE between now and the release of AoE2.

At Activision, work on *Civilization: Call to Power* is well under way. The game's time frame will extend well beyond that of its predecessors to the year 3000; thus players can expect a veritable deluge of new structures and technologies. Offensive units will also be more varied, with ecoterrorists, lawyers and televangelists accounting for some of the more terrifying (not to mention amusing) forces that players will have to come to grips with. Scalable graphics levels will mean that owners of the latest and greatest PC's will enjoy astonishing levels of visual detail, while those whose machines lack processing grunt won't miss out on what looks to be one of the most promising strategy games currently in development. While it remains to be seen how effective this system will be, Activision assure us that the game will run smoothly in 640x480 resolution on a P90!

Many strategy gamers will be disheartened to learn that the release dates of *Heroes of Might and Magic 3*, *Jagged Alliance 2* and Sid Meier's *Alpha Centauri* have all slipped back to early 1999. But, on a more positive note, *North vs South* (Interactive Magic's latest title based on the American Civil War) and *Settlers 3* should both hit store shelves in the coming weeks.

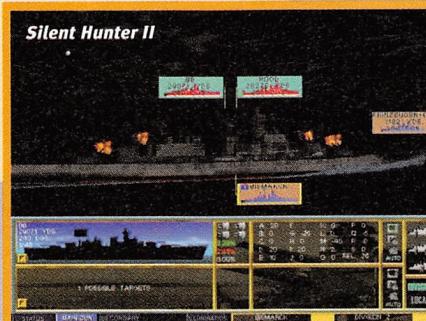
Sims

Maj. Ian Lindgren

I'm still in towed array mode trawling for information on *Jane's 688i/AEGIS*, so you will have to wait for more on that one.

However, SSI have firmed up a release date for *Fighting Steel* as March 1999. Fighting Steel recreates some of the most spectacular naval gunnery battles of WWII, and players will face the challenge of commanding ships and task forces from the British, French, German, and Italian fleets with over 90 ships simulated in the game. SSI boast that Fighting Steel has the depth of a detailed surface warfare simulation and the tactical challenges to keep naval sim fans busy for weeks.

SSI is also leading the way below surface with *Silent Hunter II* due for release in June



1999. *Silent Hunter II* carries on the tradition of its predecessor and improves on gameplay by adding multiplay options and radio communications with other subs, air and land based units to coordinate the deadly "Wolf Pack". This will be a key element in the game as it was for U-Boat commanders of the time. From what I can see, this game is scheduled for release at the same time as SSI's *Harpoon 4*, so sub simmers can look forward to many a winter's evening silently gliding through the cold Atlantic waters!

Reality check for a moment, and get back in the saddle! Interactive Magic have released news that they are developing *iA10 Warthog* for a release date of May 99. There's not much yet on the game, other than a few screenshots, and news that it will run under version two of their DEMON graphics engine. DEMON V2 maps real world elevation data and satellite images to give near photo realism, but I hope iMagic improve it over *iFA/18 CSF* where I found it to be a little stodgy at low level; something that cannot happen for an A10 sim to be successful! On the bright side, I've noticed that all the iMagic simulation game briefs I've read lately seem to be adopting a virtual battlefield environment. This has great pay offs for gamers because it integrates air, land and sea games by LAN and modem. We'll just have to wait and see as the game designs firm up. That's it for 1998, let's see what 1999 brings us!

Online

Gareth Jones

There's still plenty of misinformation, rumours and scuttlebutt going around about the Online gamers' greatest tool, ICQ. A new derivative has entered into beta testing, called GNN (www.universal-gaming.com), and GNN reps seem to know information about ICQ that most of us don't, somehow. Their email reads, in part, "Since AOL has bought out ICQ starting in the year 2000 ICQ will no longer be free, and most people who do use ICQ will not pay a monthly fee". It was the first I'd heard of ICQ definitely planning charges for use, so I checked out their website, but couldn't find any statement other than the usual "time limited free beta" policy that ICQ has had since day one. Did I miss something, or have



Ultima Online: The Second Age

expedition
features
upgrade
screens
FAQ

Read about the latest discoveries in the new lands.
See the Second Age features.
Find out how to upgrade and password.
See game screens from the new lands.
Read the frequently asked questions.

Ultima Online: The Second Coming

GNN misunderstood the situation?

Anyway, on to the games. First up, and the (probably) good news is that Origin have announced a "special thank-you offer" for *UO* players who decide to upgrade to *UO: The Second Age* (*UO2A*) - at least those in America and Canada, anyway. Under the deal, *UO* players will be able to upgrade to *UO2A* for \$US6.99, including shipping and handling. So, er, what about non-US and Canadian players? No details as yet, but hopefully we'll get a thankyou too...

If the Major likes it, then it has to be good, in my book. You can check out his review of *European Air War* on page 80, but you can also play it on Microsoft's Gaming Zone (which has now become a part of MSN, erk!). Microsoft reps recently announced that the Microprose game will be available for free multiplay through the Zone (www.zone.com), for those without access to a LAN.

Still with huge mega-corporation game sites, it seems that AOL is getting serious about online games, finally. They've long been known for their fun filled board and card games rooms, but due to a recent deal they've struck with VR-1 they will be revamping and upgrading their emphasis on decent online gaming. What does AOL mean to us in Australia, I hear you ask? Well, a localised version of AOL has just been launched here, don't ya know? Joy.

RING

Come play with Siegmund the Hero and Brunnhilde the Valkyrie

Category Adventure
Players 1
Publisher Cryo Interactive
Available TBA

Never let it be said that we gamers wouldn't be interested in an adaptation of one of the world's greatest operas to a computer game. Wagner's 'The Nibelung's Ring' (or, more commonly 'The Ring Cycle') has undergone some fairly hefty reworkings and adaptations (Tolkien's 'Lord Of The Rings' is one of the most prominent to people like us), but the thought of an interactive computer game based upon The Ring Cycle is an idea quintessentially European, and it's thanks to the delightfully innovative folks at Cryo that we're going to be playing what looks to be a truly amazing game.

Valhalla falls

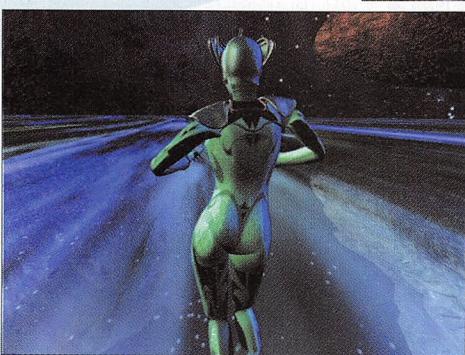
Though it follows the story of the Wagnerian opera, with the rise and fall of the four gods of Valhalla, the game is set far, far into the future, replete with dark and moody visuals, suitably grotesque characters, and 'dirty' sci-fi gadgetry and costumes (think 'City of the Lost Children' meets 'Blade Runner').

In the time that Cryo's Ring is set, the earth has been subjugated to extraterrestrial rule by alien 'gods' (for want of a better word), and the remnants of the human race have only their art with which to bargain and sustain them. The main character, Ish, is set with the task of recreating the long-forgotten Wagnerian Opera 'The Nibelung's Ring' (yes yes, very post-modern and all that) on Terra 2, the last remaining piece of Earth, which has been transformed into a huge theatre. As you move Ish around and into the saga you/he discovers/enacts the other

main characters; Alberich the tyrannical dwarf, Loge the fire spirit, Siegmund the hero, and Brunnhilde the Valkyrie.

Interactive Opera

You will be in control of each of the four characters at different points during the game, in what is promised to be a multi-pathed



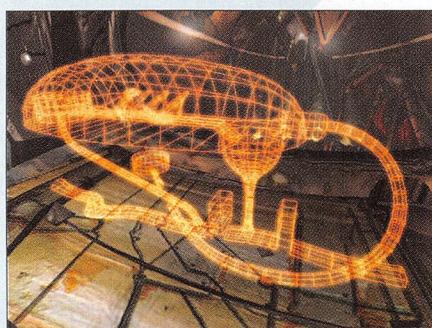
non-linear storyline, with the ability to swap back and forth between the four playable characters at times of your choosing. Visually, the game looks great, too. The look and feel is taken from illustrations for stage design done by Druillet (an illustrator of some repute)



When Cryo's ideas work, they tend to work so very well. It looks extremely likely that The Ring is going to be one of those ideas that works

in 1972 for a performance of the opera which never came to fruition. But it's here now, sort of, in first person 3D, using a game engine not unlike Omni 3D, though it seems much richer and more capable. You really are allowed a full 360 degrees of rotation, as well as

the vertical axes to search up and down for clues and 'hot spots' to click on. One of the greatest problems with games of this nature is



that they can all too easily become a rather boring affair, just a simple point and click-fest. Ring however, from what we have seen of it, is a very addictive and enjoyable game to play. You do need to move your mouse over the screen to find hotspots, but there are some nice puzzles as well as decent interaction with other game characters.

More everything!

Also, in a lovely touch, the music for the game will be from the opera itself, as performed by the famous Vienna Philharmonic, and from what we've seen and heard of the game so far this adds a very atmospheric touch. There's also around 45 minutes of FMV in total for the game (the beta version came on 7 CD's, though there's no word on whether the final version will be as large or whether a DVD version will also be available), and 22 characters to act and interact with.

So whether you're an opera buff or not Ring looks to have the goods. The visuals are fantastic, the idea behind it is great, and the gameplay hasn't been neglected either. So, essentially from our perspective, it's like opera, but good.

FIFA 99

Category Football Sim
Players 1-TBA
Publisher EA Sports
Available 1st Quarter 99

Yes! FIFA's back! But let's get the angsty bits out of the way first shall we?

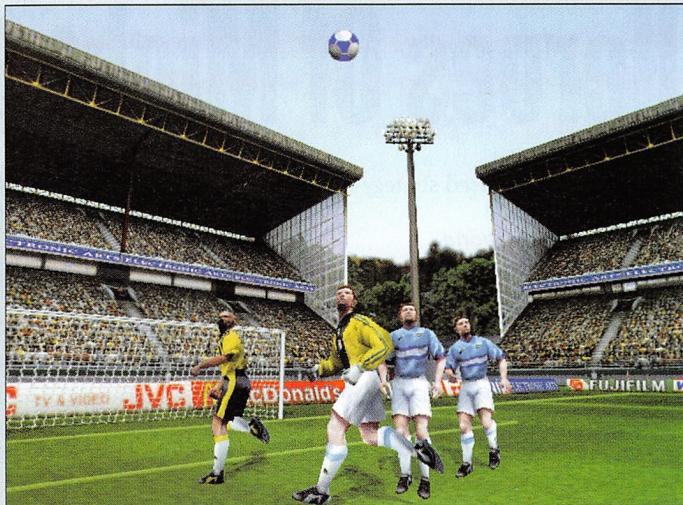
There's still no bloody TCP/IP play! As Kyle would say; "you baaaastards!". EA does just about everything else right, but they still continue to ignore what could be a strong selling point of the game. Ah well, maybe for FIFA 2000...

Anyway, we've only been able to get our hands on an alpha version of the game so far, but from what we have seen FIFA 99 will be a definite improvement. Though there was plenty of detail in the player figures for FIFA 98 and World Cup, FIFA 99 will have even more detail.



Players move about just like real people, following the ball with their head, putting their head down when they sprint, gesticulating at the ref when he awards a penalty against them, and even headbutting opposition players when things get a bit heated!

The game play will be tweaked too, so we're told, with a few new moves, including a much needed 'shielding' move to guard the



One of the new features, just window dressing really, but the players actually follow the ball with their heads now

ball, and a chest trap move to bring the ball down from the air. It was also heartening to see the menus for the FIFA series improving markedly - there's still a way to go, but they are, finally, getting better.

There will be a good variety of leagues to play in, including a European Super League, as well as the option to cre-

ate your own custom leagues, and there's also a new mode of play called 'Golden Goal' where the game just continues until one team scores a certain number of goals - and this might prove very popular for multiplayer games. Good stuff indeed.

So it's looking good for FIFA. Not quite the first of the 'next generation' of football sims, perhaps, but another in the continually improving FIFA series, and one to certainly look forward to.

Star Trek: New Worlds

Category Real time Strategy
Players 1-TBA
Publisher Interplay
Available TBA

If you're a Star Trek fan and you own a PC then you'd have to be pretty happy with yourself. There are now Trek games for just about every genre there is (bar the Star Trek racing game, which is surely only a matter of time). You've got ST: Birth of the Federation for the turn based anal strategy freaks, Klingon Honor Guard for first person shooter action, a variety of adventure games like First Contact, Starfleet Academy for sci-fi fans, and even Star Trek Pinball for the really desperate and more pathetic Trekkies.

But one of the most prominent genres in computer games today has, until now, been neglected by the Star Trek franchises from both Microprose and Interplay. New Worlds is, in keeping with the current trend, based in a 3D world, and has a similar

look and feel to many other like games. The units however, are definitely Trek oriented, with names such as the Federation Phaser Tank, the Klingon Mobile Disruptor Battery, and the Romulan Cloaking Tank, to name but a few.

Developers Binary Asylum have only just begun full blown development of the game, so

many of the details about the final product are still not clear, but from what we've seen you should expect a fairly authentic Trek experience, even if the TV series has never really shown battles or units of the RTS nature. The battle will be fought between the



Real Time Strategy Trek; a disconcertingly obvious idea

nasty Romulans, the Klingons and the good guys, the Federation, along with three new alien races that have popped up on these worlds that have been brought in mysteriously to the alpha quadrant. Sounds like an intriguing storyline, doesn't it? Well, it's actually quite a good one, so we won't spoil it for you just yet. More soon.



Heroes Of Might & Magic III

Category Turn based strategy
Players 1-Multi
Publisher New World Computing
Available January

Less a revolution than an evolution, HOMM3 continues the story of probably the best turn-based strategy game of all time. The success of the series can be attributed almost entirely to its supreme accessibility. Vividly attractive graphics, beautiful music, intuitive game design facilitated by a remarkably pure interface, it all added up to that rare thing - deep,



Mr Wildgoose calls it game of the year, and he hasn't even played it yet! High praise indeed

involving strategy that anyone could play (but only few would master, of course).

For the latest creation, New World are pledging an extra two as-yet-unknown castle types with each of the eight castles boasting their own hero types (a fighter and a spellcaster - it is a Might & Magic game, after all). Spells will now be organised

into four distinct schools of magic (earth, fire, air and water) just as in M&M6. Heroes have to be outfitted with their artifacts, so you can wear only one helm or wield one sword, for example. They can also be stationed in the garrison of your castles and may command up to seven different troop types in their army. Larger battlefields are promised, thanks to the use of higher resolution graphics (that's 800x600 instead of 640x480), while trees and

rocks and other things can also be destroyed within combat.

Better yet, underground terrain will feature in the shape of dungeons and caves, genuine alliances between players will allow for trading of items and troops, computer AI will be vastly improved and there'll be 59 monsters plus a unique upgrade for each!

This will be one of the games of the year, take my word for it.

David Wildgoose

Star Wars: Rogue Squadron

Category Arcade flight sim
Players 1-TBA
Publisher LucasArts
Available TBA

LucasArts have rightly enough built a name for themselves as one of the most professional and talented development houses in the world. Their games are almost all of outstanding quality, with innovative touches and ground breaking ideas. If it weren't for titles such as the console-y and mediocre Shadows Of The Empire, there'd be nary a black mark to Lucas Arts' name.

Alarm bells began to ring, then, when we heard that they were putting the final touches to a new Star Wars game called Rogue Squadron, a game which promised 'just as much arcade style fun' as SOTE. Arcade action can be fun though, and Rogue Squadron really is fun to play, even if it is far removed from the X-Wing series in terms of style.



(top) Star Wars fans will be pleased to note that you can blow up Jabba's palace on Tatooine

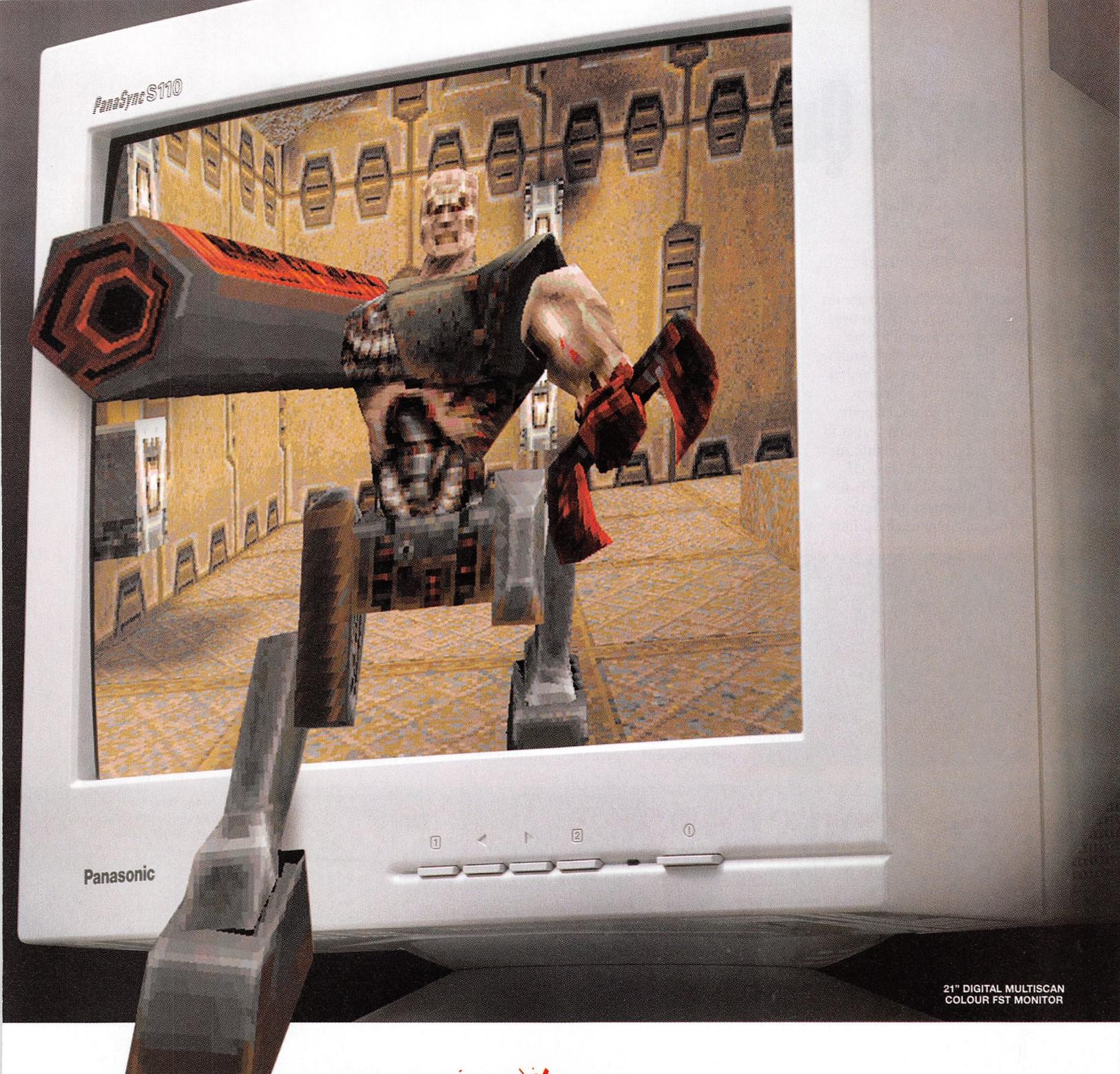


The 'Rogue' squadron is a group of 12 of the best pilots put together by Luke Skywalker and good old Wedge Antilles, and their task is to deal with the menaces of the Empire as they occur. So you'll be asked to per-

form a number of missions, including dogfighting, escorts, rescues, reconnaissance, and so on. Along the way you'll be facing a large array of authentic SW craft and people, from regulation TIE Bombers and Interceptors, AT-AT's and AT-ST's, as well as Tuskan Raiders, Jawas and the like.

So it's all authentic, and it

looks very pretty (fully polygonal craft and buildings, lovely 3D worlds), but the gameplay is definitely aimed towards those with arcade leanings. It's very much a point and shoot affair, but it had our resident Star Wars freak Malcolm quite excited, even if we all did think that it was a game particularly well suited to the N64...



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VIDEO	RGB analog

HORIZONTAL FREQUENCY	Operation range: 30.0 kHz to 95.0 kHz
VERTICAL FREQUENCY	Operation range: 58.0 Hz to 180.0 Hz
MAXIMUM PIXEL CLOCK	202.5 Mhz
MAXIMUM RESOLUTION	1600 dots (H) x 1200 lines (V)/75 Hz
DISPLAY AREA	392 x 294 mm (1600 x 1200)

*USER DEFINABLE TIMINGS	Maximum pixel clock: 202.5 MHz;
RESOLUTION	Maximum Refresh Rate (Hz)
1152 x 870	103
1280 x 1024	88
1600 x 1200	75

*The table above lists the maximum which the S110 will operate for several standard resolutions. Note that not all video cards are capable of operating at the S110's higher refresh rates.

What's New
by
Panasonic

King's Quest: Mask of Eternity

Category Adventure

Players 1

Publisher Sierra

Available Christmas 98

Sierra's King's Quest games have always been too twee and sentimental for our tastes here at PowerPlay. And we've never been overly fond of their propensity for sudden-death endings either. Happily, then, we're surprisingly eager to get our hands on the eighth in the series, subtitled Mask Of Eternity. Why so? Well, it looks like KQ has grown up a little.

The most remarkable differ-



Kings Quest in 3D! The oldest of games enters the new age, and it's about time too!

ence between this and its forefathers is the spunky new 3D graphics engine. Apparently, both first and third-person views will be possible (with the player able to switch in an instant) as the kingdom of Daventry is brought to life in a manner we definitely thought we'd never see. King's Quest with a polygon count - heavens!

With a story that details an entire population (except one, of course) turned to stone, the cynics out there might suggest that the new engine couldn't really cope with loads of characters wandering around. But such a claim is easily knocked on the head by the inclusion of action and fighting elements in the game. Similar to Dark Earth or Twinsen's Odyssey, the puzzle solving and general chatting will be interspersed with swordfights and other derring-do.

It will be interesting to gauge the reaction to Mask Of Eternity when it is released. Many traditional KQ fans are likely to be unimpressed by the action leanings of the gameplay, as if it's somehow betraying the roots of its success. However, we're prepared to wait and judge the game on its own merits. So far, though, we kinda like what we see.

David Wildgoose



Mad Trax

Category Arcade racing

Players 1-TBA

Publisher Roadshow

Available 1st Quarter '99

There must be a huge market, or at least a huge perception of a market, for these kinds of games. You know what we're talking about; console styled racing games set in the techno-oriented future where drivers race to the death (usually) over a number of courses using a number of different vehicles, usually with powerups, sometimes with weapons, and always with only passing concern for real world physics. Anyway, however you feel about them, you've gotta admit that there's quite a few of them around. And now, yes you guessed it, now there's another.

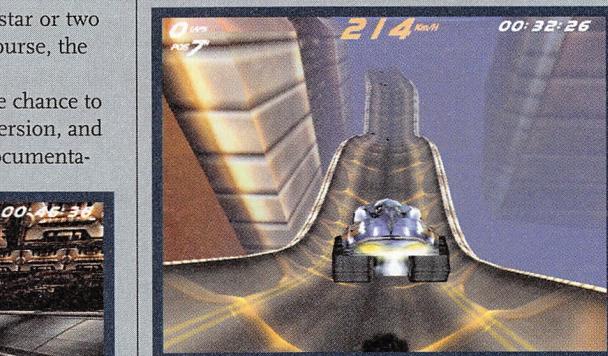
Mad Trax is very reminiscent of Pod,

both in look and feel. However, where you were racing on the ground in Pod, in Mad Trax you're racing on a suspension beam thingy high above, well, nothing. There's just the racing track and nothing else (bar the odd star or two thousand) - and, of course, the opposition drivers.

We've only had the chance to take a look at a beta version, and there wasn't much documenta-



In the future, our very lives will depend upon our driving skills.



a tad annoying. Anyway, apart from that the driving model did feel reasonably good, taking into account that the designers aren't really shooting for realism. The feeling of speed is very apparent once you get up towards top speed, and hustling with the AI cars during corners was, as always, bigtime fun.

So that's it then. It's obviously enough not going to be a world beater, the next paradigm leap for gaming, and there didn't really seem to be anything in there that was particularly new or innovative. Still, it's a simple, and fun arcade game, and there's nothing wrong with that. Should be out early next year sometime, we're told.



tion included. Even so, the driving model feels a bit strange because while the other cars can powerslide around corners you don't seem to be able to, which is

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Civilization 2: The Test of Time

Category Turn based strategy

Players 1-TBA

Publisher Microprose

Available TBA

Ah yes, the wonderful world of Civilization 2. Still one of the best games ever made, and according to Microprose, still worthy of tweaks and updates. Well, you see, that's essentially what this looks to be. If you've played Civ or Civ2 it's probably a fair bet to say that you would have made some changes to the interface. The play was compelling and intricate, but the interface made things a little difficult. There was so much wasted space on screen that could have been used to show you at a glance detailed information about your empire.

Microprose to the rescue, then. Civ2: The Test Of Time is a refinement of the Civ2 'series'. It still seems to be the same game, but with some impressive tweaks and enhance-

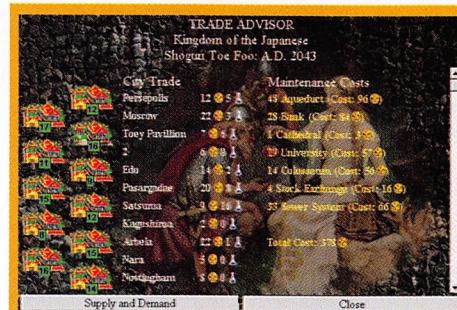
ments over the original version. To begin with, they have decided to add some much needed life to the environment, with animated populations, grazing buffalo and swimming fishies. Then there's the new interface, which can be seen in the accompanying screenshots. Nice. And then, rather confusingly, Microprose tell us that Civ2: TOT will have 'linked maps'. Which might be kind of like opening up a portal to another world, and then moving your units into it for colonisation and exploration. The other worlds on offer (along with the stan-



The original masters, MicroProse, polish and perfect their masterpiece even in the absence of Sid Meier

dard Civ2 world) are an 'animated fantasy world based on Midgaard' and an s/f themed world, with alien threats and ultimately the conquest of entire solar sys-

tems. It all sounds rather intriguing, and could well be a great game. We're not quite sure whether you're going to be asked to pay full price, and there's been no word on the multiplayer capabilities (of course) as yet from Microprose, but we'll keep you posted.



Wargasm

Category Arcade tank sim

Players 1-TBA

Publisher Roadshow

Available TBA

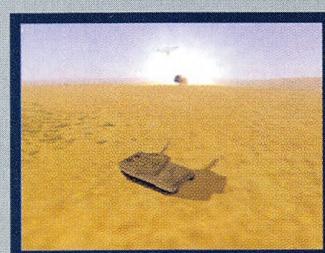
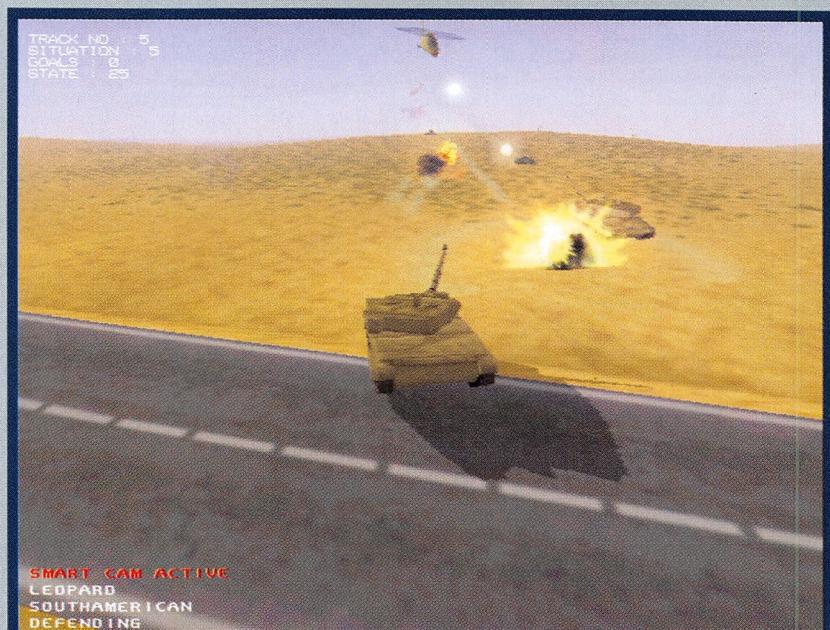
Despite the rather confronting name, Wargasm looks set to be a very interesting game. It's another game that refines the concept of what an RTS game is, blending first person action with strategic decision making a'la Battlezone, along with a smattering of resource management to boot.

Developers DID software are known for flight sims (EF2000, F-22, Total Air War), and the accuracy and realism which they bring to simulations, but Wargasm seems to be much more of an arcade styled game. From the alpha version that we've been able to take a look at, it seems that while the physics of movement are fairly accurate, the actual gameplay is far from a military sim. Controlling a tank, for example, consists of using a joystick to manoeuvre around

and find enemy tanks, then shooting them for one shot kills. This is not to say that it isn't fun, just that you shouldn't expect a serious hard-core military style affair. We're in shoot-em-up territory here.

You will be in control of a task force in a number of worldwide arenas, with equipment such as tanks, helicopters and ground troops available for your control. Each unit can be controlled by you at any time you choose, and you'll also have the ability to pull back to a tactical map where you can issue orders to your troops.

There doesn't seem to be much (if any) resource management, apart from only having a finite number of troops to choose from for each mission - so no harvesters required, thank



Oh HO HO HO! What a funny name for a game! Kids, just ask your parents why it's so humorous if you don't get it...

god. It is very pretty to look at too, with both software and hardware video modes, and with hardware acceleration you can expect some very nice graphical effects. There will be extensive support for multiplay as well (dare we call it Multiple Wargasm?), and if the end result lives up to the potential then we predict that this is going to be a very popular game. More soon.

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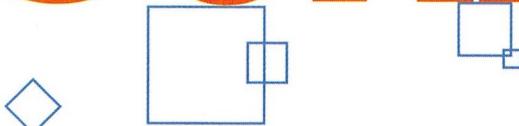
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Wartorn ALPHA PREVIEW

'The all-encompassing war-zone'. It's being built, will you come?

Category 3D RTS
Players 1-32 (TCP/IP, IPX, Modem, dedicated internet server)
Publisher Eyst/Impact
Available Early/Mid '99

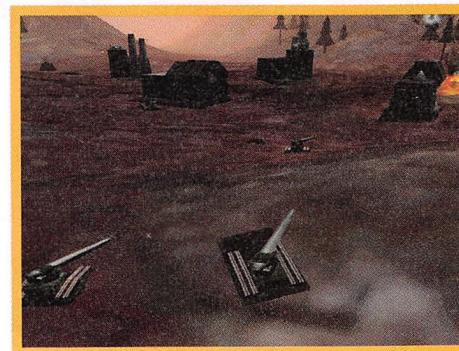
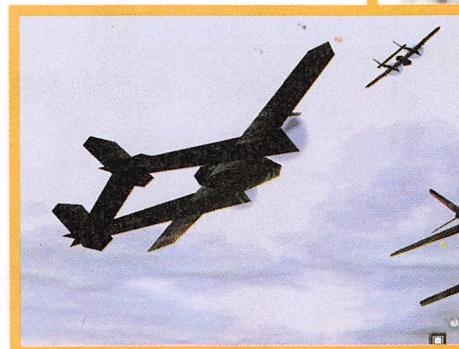
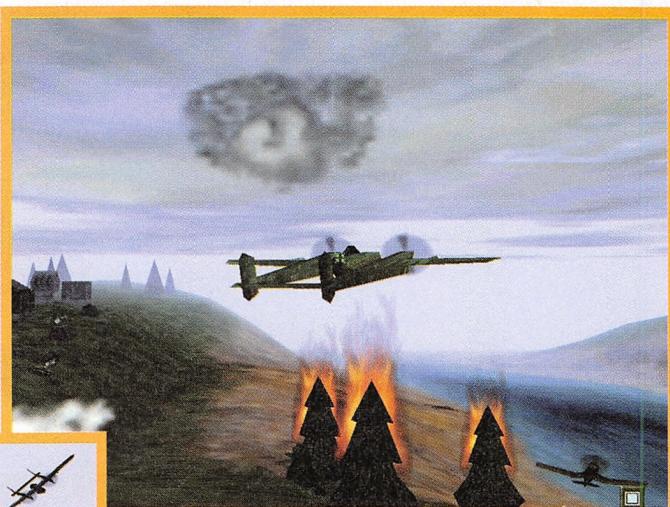
We've brought you news about Wartorn before, the truly 3D Real Time Strategy game from local developers Eyst, and we were suitably impressed the last time we got the chance to take a look at how things were going, back at the pre-alpha stage. We've since received an updated version of the game, and if we were impressed before, we're certainly blown away now. Eyst, and project leader Ben Moss, have continued to refine the look and feel of Wartorn until it has become more than just exciting, it really looks as if it will be one of the vanguard of the next generation of Real Time Strategy games.

It's mainly the customisable nature of the game that sets this apart, though the attraction of fighting on land, sea, and air from any camera viewpoint imaginable cannot be discounted. But, really, the level of user control over the battles, resource management and financial management is what we feel to be the strongest feature of the game. Any unit can be customised to your liking, from bigger cannons to stronger armour, to the amount of fuel and ammunition it carries. There are also features like the ability to stock your factories with people - the more people you assign to your tank building facility, for example, the faster tanks will get made. You'll also be dealing with the morale of your workers; work them too much and they'll be stuffed, so you'll need to send them off to the R&R room every so often for a break because as every good boss knows, a happy worker is a productive worker.

Also, in what could be a very nice touch, there will be a fully customisable formation editor as well, so you can set up your

formations just as you would like them to be (in fairly comprehensive detail, we're told). Along with this, you'll also be dealing with raw materials and money, you'll be buying materials from the open market, and the prices will be fluctuating in a free market way, so you'll need some astute financial sense to make the most of your opportunities.

This may all sound a little confronting, given that so many of us have become inured to the old style simplistic 'build em up and send em in' approach that so many RTS games favour. You shouldn't be worried though, because in keeping with the ultra-customisable feeling of the overall game, you will be able to set how much micro-management you wish to take control of. So if you're the kind of person that doesn't want to bother too much with the 'behind the scenes' action then you won't have to.



Because of the scope and customisability, this will require die-hard RTS fans to re-adjust their expectations - upwards!

Ambitious? Most certainly! Can Eyst pull it off? Well, the indications are very good at this stage. The proprietary engine is in place and the game mechanics look to be nearing completion too. The graphics do have that washed out 3Dfx look to them, and when viewed up close the units don't have an incredible level of detail, but these are not necessarily gruesome

faults with the game. When you consider that you can zoom in and out to view the game from any angle or viewpoint, and that maps are going to encompass a (to scale) size of around 10 square kilometres it would be unfair to want more detailed units.

This really is the kind of game that will garner attention from all over the world purely because of the quality of the engine, the innovative design, the unparalleled freedom for customisation of the way the game is played and the units themselves, and plenty more. We're as excited as all hell, and you should be too.

HERETIC III

RARELY HAS A SEQUEL GENERATED MORE INTEREST THAN THAT OF HERETIC II, A SEQUEL THAT COULD COME BACK A FEW FEET AND SHOOT A FIREBALL INTO THE FACE OF OTHER 3D SHOOTERS. LET US EXPLAIN.



With a little help from the ever-impressive Doom engine, Heretic II looks set to be graphically stunning.

It could be claimed that Raven's Heretic was the very first Doom clone, and it was certainly id's first dabble with the unusual concept of licensing its graphics engine to a potential rival.

What lending the Doom engine to Raven did establish was that it took nothing away from the original game and in fact built up id's reputation even further. While many companies proved that they could design 3D engines that were just as powerful as the Doom one, it suddenly became clear that announcing to the world that you were licensing the Doom engine was nearly as

impressive as coming up with it in the first place. Everyone was more interested that Raven were taking and improving the engine and that id had welcomed Raven's improvements, than they were in how the game actually looked.

"Licensing the Doom engine was nearly as impressive as coming up with it in the first place"

Raven added all the elements everyone wished were there in the first place. Heretic allowed you to look up and down, to swim in water (but you remained constantly buoyant) to collect and store inventory items for later use and even to fly. It was, in short, welcome and impressive.

Then Raven impressed us all again with Hexen, a sort of follow up. The RPG-style story line remained, the inventory system remained, spells were added, a choice of character classes offered, windows and other level elements were breakable and the concept of hubs created. The hub was the centre of a world, with various levels spinning off.

With a more obvious and engaging story, you should find yourself totally involved until the very end.



The new computer AI means that the enemy will be guided towards your location.

The idea was that the game would appear less linear and you could tackle the levels in any order, collecting puzzle items in one level to use in another. Hexen II took this further, and used the Quake engine to great effect. Once again Raven impressed with stunning architecture and a wonderfully large catapult that fired you over castle walls.

Their stunning achievements to date have built up giddily crazy levels of expectation for Heretic II, and the totally original elements it will inevitably offer.

The script continues after Heretic. Corvus, the hero of the game, has defeated D'Sparil, one of the serpent riders, but a dying curse was to keep him from returning to his home world. Fortunately Corvus finds a way, but by the time he gets there he finds that his people have been infected by a deadly virus, and he himself contracts it as he arrives. It's his own self-preservation that sends Corvus looking for a cure and the source of the virus.

"He's a very reluctant hero," states Dan Freed, producer of Heretic II at Raven. "He does it because he has to."

Heretic II uses the Quake II engine, but as you would imagine, Raven hasn't used the boxed version, opting to make one or two customisations. Most obvious is that Corvus is now seen in the third person, Tomb Raider style, which is also why there is just the one character even though Hexen had a choice of three and Hexen II had four (or five if you include the mission pack).

"It means that we can focus on one character and really bring his personality and movement out," explains Freed. "There's still as many weapons for the one character as there was in the whole of Hexen - more actually. Corvus' animations are extremely fluid. We've been asked if we did motion capture for him. We didn't, we've just got two very talented animators. It really allows us to put a strong focus on his character."

We're not going for the RPG elements. We're trying to go back to the core action we had with Heretic. The third-person perspective allows us to do the things that we couldn't do in first-person, like dive rolls, flips left and right, and hand springs. It would obviously be confusing with a first-person camera.

There's a risk that it all sounds a bit Tomb Raiderish, though. Tomb Raider has a definite impact on

the game," admits Freed. "People were narrow minded about third-person games, and Tomb Raider opened people's eyes. The concept idea for a third-person Heretic actually came before the original Hexen game was started, but the technology wasn't at the point that allowed us to do what we had in mind."

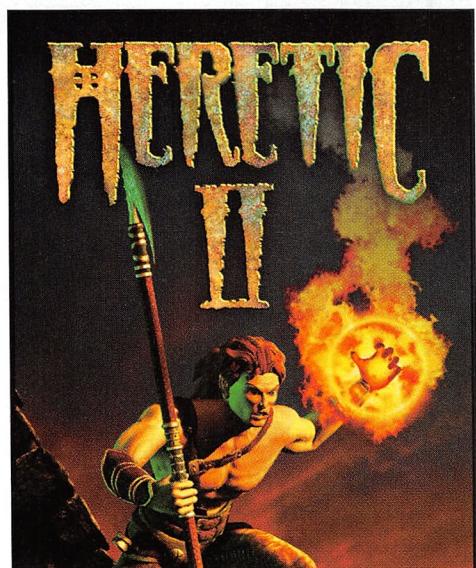
Moving a Quake game to the third-person brought its own problems that turned out to be more of a handful than Raven seemed prepared for. "How do you comfortably shoot the baddies if you aren't sure exactly where you're pointing?" Freed explains.

"It's kind of like Quake or Doom but with a free camera. It aids you with the vertical tracking, but not to the extent that Tomb Raider did. It's almost as if you had a narrow cone stretching in front of you. It locks on to whatever falls within that cone."

"Tomb Raider had a definite impact"

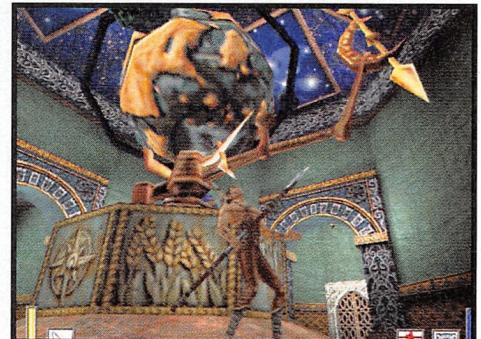
Besides, Heretic II encourages the use of spells rather than constant offensive weapons. Freed estimates that you'll be using spells rather than projectile weapons for 50% of the time.

"Also there aren't any traditional pick-ups," announces Freed. "Only keys and puzzle items will end up in your inventory. Everything else is based on spells, so once you learn a spell you can cast it, as long as you have mana. We have shrines that are used for healing,





With a low learning curve, Raven are hoping to attract a wide audience to Heretic II.



The third-person perspective will enable you to do things you could not have done in the first-person perspective.

breathing under water, flight and the like. But some shrines can only be used once. We want the players to feel like this was a real world."

The most important addition though, is the new enemy AI. Raven have included a system of hidden buoys that mark out areas that the enemy can reach, enabling him to use platforms and lifts, find his way to you and operate machinery. It should provide an unparalleled level of reality as they respond to the tactics.

Heretic was popular, but never as popular as

Doom. But Freed is sure that Heretic II will be a mass-market hit rather than a cult.

"We're expecting it to have break-out potential," he boasts. "We've tried to keep the control scheme simple so that the novice players can pick it up easily. Quake sells well because it's Quake and it has new technology and multi-player appeal. Myst sells well to the mass market. It's easy to get into and there's a low learning curve. We're trying to appeal to both those sets. We've got all the customisability and fast-paced action of Quake and the ease and quick learning curve of Myst and Tomb Raider." If Raven can keep these promises, the wider gaming world could be theirs for the taking. Heretic II is due out this November.

MA15+ Medium Level Animated Violence

IN IT FOR THE MONEY

A few months ago, Activision acquired the rights to Soldier of Fortune, an American magazine packed to the testosteron-soaked gills with guns, butch blokes in ill fitting vest tops and large weapons.

It came as little surprise to learn that it was to be turned into a game also using the Quake II engine and also programmed by Raven. And while Soldier of Fortune may mean little to us other than its literal phraseology, that there is going to be another Raven-based 3D shooter is cause for some tempered celebration.

"The game is focused on hyper-realism," claims Freed somewhat cryptically. "Super realistic but just beyond realism," he continues, helpfully. "On the edge of believable, much like the best action movies," he concludes, slightly more descriptively.

HEAVY GEAR II

PROVING THAT THERE WAS MORE TO MECHWARRIOR THAN THE MECHWARRIOR LICENCE, ACTIVISION RELEASED HEAVY GEAR LAST YEAR. THE SEQUEL HAS NOW ARRIVED BUT SOMEWHAT REDEFINED.



More intelligent AI, gorgeous graphics and fast-paced action should ensure this title is a winner.

It came as a bit of a shock when Microprose announced that they had taken the MechWarrior license away from Activision. The latter had achieved stunning success with MechWarrior 2 and the sequel Mercenaries, but pulled out all the stops to sign on Dream Pod 9's similar universe, known as Heavy Gear. It seemed a perfect solution. Heavy Gear is the fastest-growing role playing universe, and the Gears in the game are smaller and more agile than Mechs.

Heavy Gear satiated the demands for instant Gear action, while Heavy Gear II is the true labour of love - the game that really takes advantage of the new universe.

"Heavy Gear I was rather like using the new franchise but shoe-horning in the old engine to make it feel like MechWarrior II," admits Dave

Georges, Producer of Heavy Gear II. "Heavy Gear II has a brand new engine, there's no common code at all. We've given it a more photorealistic look. More action, a more nimble, fast-paced game. It leans more towards Quake, but we have kept a lot of the old feel. The controls are more simplified, but you must give orders to your squad, which gives extra depth."

Activision have already proved with Battlezone that they are capable of creating a highly strategic 3D first-person action-game. While Heavy Gear II uses a different orders system: "We've got a drop-down map that you can click on" - you just know that it's going to work as slickly as Battlezone's method.

The story involves the previously warring factions joining forces to prevent Earth taking their colony back. You lead a commando group to Caprice, a planet that is situated at one of the hyperspace

gates, ready to ambush the advancing Earth force. The story unfolds throughout the 40 missions, involving joining forces with a local guerrilla force and attempting to discover the Earth forces' weaknesses.

"We've beefed up the strategy element," promises Georges. "We've spent a lot of time on artificial intelligence - you can plan an ambush or a counter-ambush - the feel of it is much more military."

In addition, the comments that the original Heavy Gear didn't take advantage of the supposed increase in speed and agility have been addressed.

"Gears are animated with a much more fluid style. Speeds have increased and more animations are available to the player, like sniping from a prone position, kneeling behind low cover and so on."



Somewhat unusually the multiplayer element was the first port of call for the development team.

We have a line of sight radar instead of a 'god's eye' top down radar. This means that potential surprises lie around every blind corner."

The entire landscape system is far more flexible too.

"We have slippery ice and lava that slows you down and eventually destroys you. It's the muddy areas that slow you down, and if it's raining it gets muddier. In addition, we have low, soft and hard cover to obfuscate people's line of site."

Unusually for most PC games that are developed, Georgeson's team actually began working on the multiplayer aspect of Heavy Gear II before they even started on the single player missions. This is a rarity for the genre and, indeed the market.

"We created the multiplayer levels first to work out the bugs and problems, and found that we could find and fix them faster," justifies Georgeson. "The multiplayer game connects you to the Activision servers, which gives you a lot of different options. There is a mass-warfare option, single player deathmatch, team games, capture the flag and some cooperative missions too." Activision are also planning to include a mission and level creation tool, although at the time of

"Heavy Gear II is a true labour of love"



While Heavy Gear II requires 3D graphic acceleration, it's believed that most PC gamers will have the necessary hardware by the time the game is released.

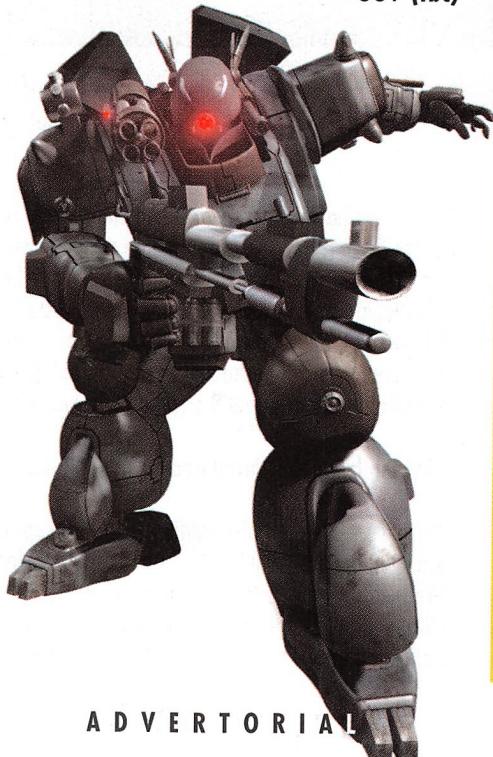
ANYTHING BUT LIGHT

Heavy Gear II uses a brand new 3D graphics engine, codenamed DarkSide. Dave Georgeson explains the need to start from scratch.

"We needed to create a 'next gen' engine that could support most video accelerator cards out of the box. We also wanted to start from scratch so that our games no longer had any 'legacy bugs' left over from previous games - fresh code is easier to debug."

writing, it has not been confirmed whether it will be packaged with the game or downloadable at a later date. What is far more certain at this stage though, it's that Heavy Gear II is going to take a popular and persistent genre and completely redefine it.

**Available in December 1998
G8+ (tbc)**

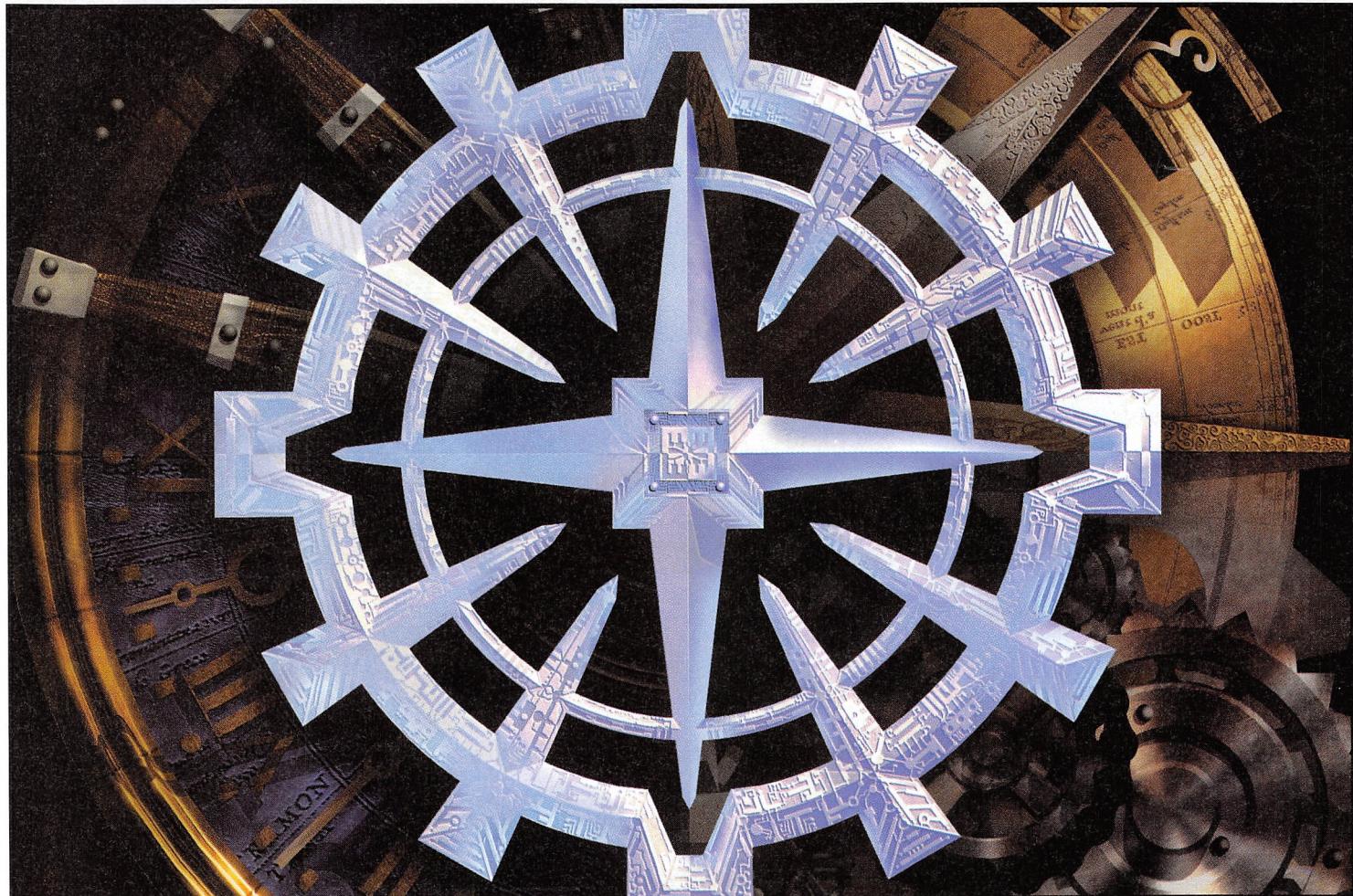


The engine pushes 4,500 triangles per second on a P133 at 15fps. Faster machines see much better results, but since our minimum system for these games is a P133, that's the base line number that we care about. Even at the base level, this is more than twice, almost three times, as many triangles as our previous engines were able to handle at that speed."

The DarkSide engine requires a 3D hardware accelerator, for what turns out to be obvious reasons. If you have a software-rendering option, the processor is clearly having to perform all the graphics functions, using up valuable cycles when it could be working on AI or physics, or even improving the graphics quality. Unless you have an almost entirely different hardware version of the game, you are just wasting the potential. By the time Heavy Gear II is released, the vast majority of games players should have 3D accelerators, resulting in a considerably better game.

CIVILIZATION: CALL TO POWER

ACTION JUNKIES TURN THEIR NOSES UP AT THE THOUGHT, BUT TAKE IT FROM US, THE CIVILIZATION SERIES COMPRIMES TWO OF THE GREATEST GAMES EVER MADE. AND ACTIVISION'S UPDATE SIMPLY HAS TO CONTINUE THE TREND.



Don't be mistaken in thinking that a concentration and strategy-heavy turn-based game has no merit or no place in today's MTV society.

Many will argue that Civ and Civ II are two of the finest games ever made, and Cecilia Barajas, Director of the latest incarnation, Civilization: Call To Power, knows exactly why.

"Civilization is so great and stands so far above the crowd because of the essential, incredibly compelling fantasy of watching your nation develop through time and the millions of strategies for playing the game. Civ II has literally millions of strategies for playing and winning. I love Starcraft, Warcraft and Red Alert, but as good as some of their missions are, they have nowhere near the amount of strategies that Civilization

has. So when we made our game, we wanted to max out the two critical broad qualities that we believe make that game so awesome."

Clearly Cecilia and her team have their work cut out for them trying to improve upon such a classic. Her first step was to take the game on a further 1,000 years so that you now have from 4000BC to 3000AD to create your civilisation. This of course adds new units and technologies and an extension into a fantasy world that we can only imagine.

Activision have also introduced new strategies.

"One of the things we're adding is the concept of 'unconventional warfare', enthuses Barajas. "What this means is that we have more than just military units. Civ CTP will have units that can do production attacks, economic attacks, happiness

attacks and so on. Some units will even 'siphon' resources such as production and gold, so not only will the person who was attacked lose the resource but the person who did the attack will gain what was lost.

For example, one of my favourite units is the Televangelist, a unit you get if you are a Theocracy government form. In this government, religion reigns supreme, with your people being an obedient, peaceful lot. You get the Televangelist minister that you can send to foreign lands to convert others to your religion. If you successfully 'attack' a city and convert its residents, they will send Tithes to you. The other civilisation will lose that gold and you'll get it. An attack like this is not an act of war."

Cecilia has also updated parts of the interface,

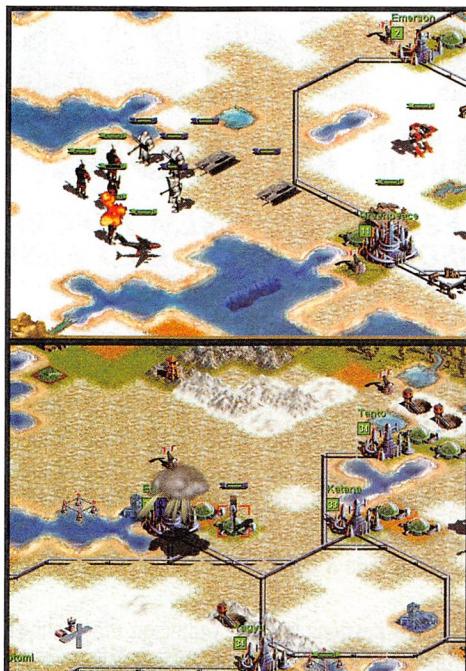
The new multiplayer options will include a variety of elements to ensure that the action is fast-paced.

including introducing build queues and macros so that you can automate some of the construction and basic political decisions. A turn in Civ II could easily take close to half an hour as you checked every city in your civilisation for maximum efficiency and happiness.

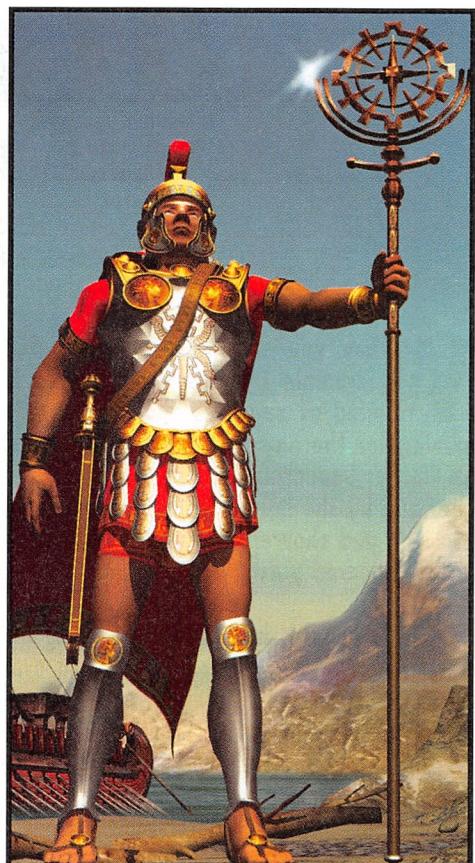
"When we first began designing the game, many people said we should go real-time and 3D," says Cecilia. "I think that in the current climate there is a kind of knee-jerk reaction that real-time and 3D are always good and are game design panaceas. I disagree. While I love real-time strategy games, the buzz is 180 degrees different than a turn-based game such as Civ. Civilization: Call To Power is a contemplative, global strategy game that encourages careful analysis and movement, a leaning that is totally at odds with a tactical, adrenaline pumped game that encourages you to move faster and think less."

At last, a member of the Civilization gang will have a multiplayer option. Naturally, when single player games can easily last between 15 and 40 hours for a big civilisation, a new technique has to be taken for the multiplayer game.

'We are implementing a variety of new multiplayer modes that will be fast-paced and fun, and allow players to have one-hour and two-hour multiplayer sessions while at the same time letting



Ignoring the temptation to go 3D and real-time, Barajas has encouraged Civ: CTP to stick with the original formula.

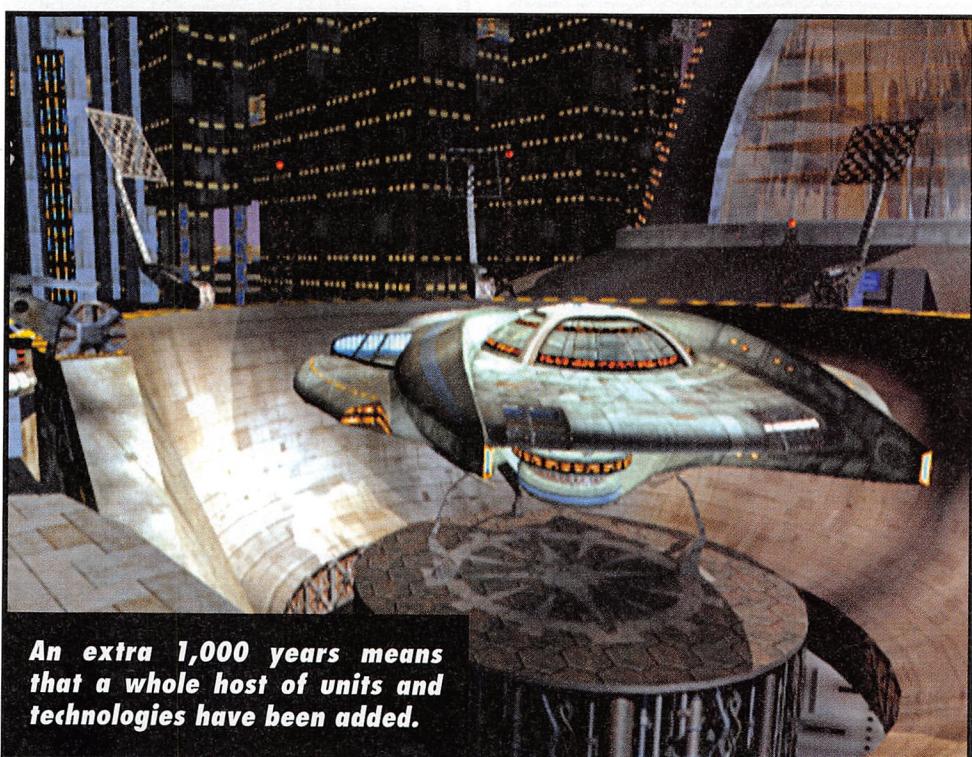


In the single player game, global strategy is paramount as is a thoughtful approach.

those die-hard Civ players have their 40-hour experiences."

Put down your rocket launchers, Quakers of the world, and enjoy the seminal experience that is Civilization: Call To Power. For it is good.

Available in March 1999



An extra 1,000 years means that a whole host of units and technologies have been added.

LEGAL MUMBO JUMBO

Last year Activision announced that they had obtained the rights to the Civilization brand, purchased from Avalon Hill, the US distributors of the original board game. Microprose, on the other hand, insisted that they held the computer game rights having already published Civilization and Civilization II.

Fortunately the argument came to a mature conclusion during the summer when Activision chose to license the Civilization name from Microprose for Civilization: Call To Power, including a deal to publish the console versions of the original Civilization II.

We're all grateful that this situation has been resolved, but the biggest surprise is that Cecilia's team were able to ignore the legal wrangling.

"My approach to the whole issue has been to insulate the development team as much as possible from any legal considerations. It's hard enough to make a game. The last thing I wanted was anyone to think twice about legal issues. And no one did. Hard as it is to believe, the legal issues had almost no bearing on our development process. We have kept our eyes on the prize, and that's making a great game."

FIGHTER SQUADRON: THE SCREAMIN DEMONS OVER EUROPE

FIRE AND FORGET MISSILES? FORGET THEM BEFORE YOU FIRE, BECAUSE FIGHTER SQUADRON IS CONCERNED WITH GOOD OLD FASHIONED DOGFIGHTING. TALLY HO, PIP, PIP, CABBAGE CRATES OVER BRINY, ETC.

When you subtitle your game *The Screamin Demons Over Europe* it kind of suggests that you aren't aiming for the anal, trainspotting market. In *Fighter Squadron*, you have to take the, um, bull by the horns, look your enemy in the eye and shower him with bullets from a few hundred yards.

Fighter Squadron is based, naturally during the Second World War, with air battles fought over Dover, Rhineland and North Africa. You can choose to side with the US, Britain or Germany, and then fly a series of missions, including combat air patrol, bombing, escort, fighter sweep and you can even take part in full-on invasions.

But your history teacher wouldn't approve. As Trevor Snowden, producer, would have it: "They're more hypothetical than factual missions. We wanted to create ultra-realistic aircraft, physics and damage models in hypothetical situations so players could experience more diversity given the type of aircraft and locations."

Air force enthusiasts will no doubt make sense of the following list of aircraft, all of which have been perfectly modelled: P-38J, B-17G, P-51D, Lancaster MK1, Mosquito FB VI, Typhoon MK1, JU-88A4, Fw190A, Me 262.

Particularly exciting in *Fighter Squadron* is the unique damage system applied to each aeroplane. "Each aircraft will have an average of 24-40 break points," explains Snowden. "These are places on the aircraft that can bend or break. When a wing or half of a wing breaks off, it will actually become a separate object, with true physics, and tumble or flutter to the ground, damaging anything it hits on the way down. At that point, the plane will be missing an aerodynamic portion of its frame, and will therefore react exactly the way that a one-winged plane would in real life.

This goes for every piece of the plane that can break off - wings, props, gear, tails and so on.

Planes will also take progressive damage from loss of oil, and your engine can also catch fire. For example, if your engine takes damage and catches on fire, the fire will start small, and if you don't do something to control it - such as dive or shut down

the engine - the fire will grow progressively larger. When you have a large stream of fire and smoke, the engine will eventually burn away from the aircraft. Similarly, fire will do progressive damage on ground objects - houses, barns, docks and so on - starting small, then growing, then catching nearby buildings on fire, depending upon which way the wind is blowing."

With 30 missions in three campaign areas played from three sides, there are 90 missions in total, each of which can be transparently played as a single or multiplayer game. You can also create your own missions with the provided Mission Editor. It certainly looks as if *Fighter Squadron* will scramble the competition when it hits the market this Christmas.



Hyper-realistic aircraft and physics are the order of the day. The battles have a more poetic licence.

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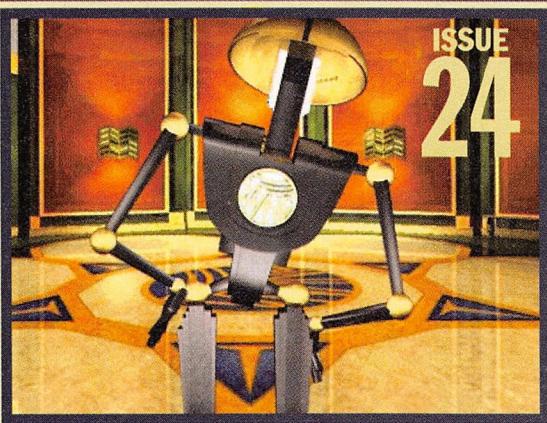
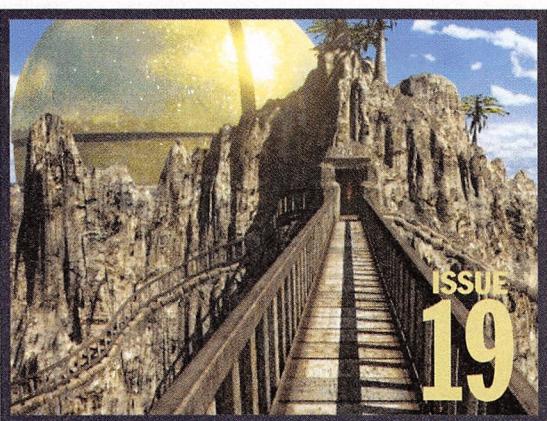
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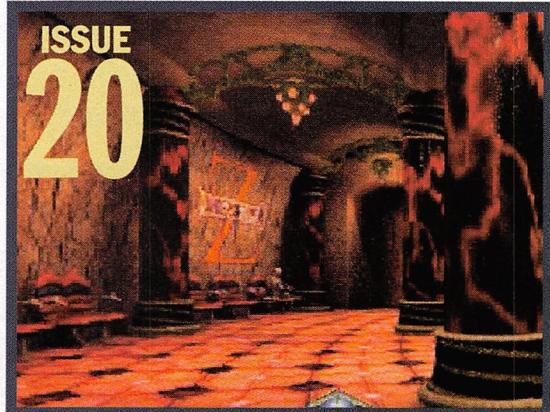
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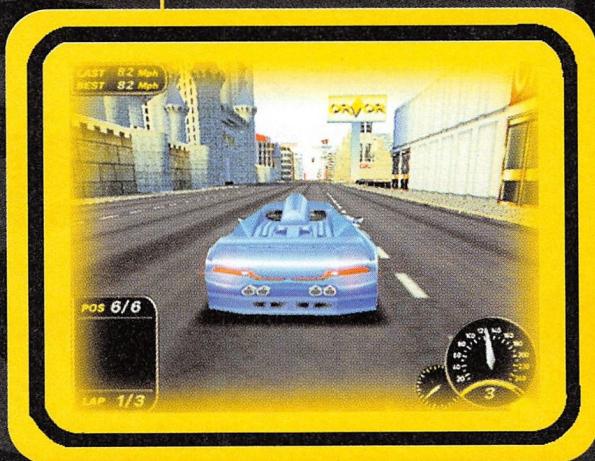
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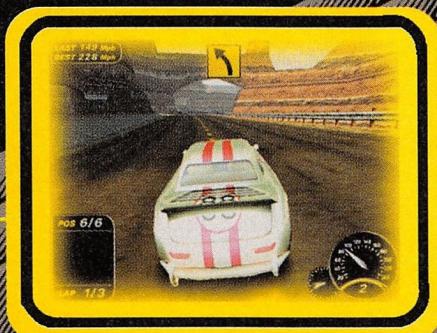


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REVIEWS

A GOLDEN AGE OF GAMING



Last month I did a bit of a song and dance (singing Kate Bush's Wuthering Heights while dancing the Macarena - my colleagues stared in impressed disbelief at my upper-octave abilities and boot scootin' skills) about the glorious return of quality gameplay in games that have, for the past 2 years, relied on 3D accelerators to make them shine. This month is a case in point. Good games, damn good games.

Ohmigod. Half Life. The folks at Valve have gone overboard with the single-player game. It's easily the most absorbing single player FPS yet - and that includes the mighty Unreal. Nice work.

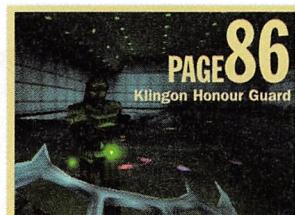
Speaking of Unreal, we have our very first 3rd-party game based on the Unreal engine. It's Klingon Honour Guard from MicroProse and a fine looking and playing game world it is. Normally we would talk about how 'Trekkies' would love it etc. etc., but we also realise that for

many the 'Star Trek' name could be a disincentive - don't worry! All Trek-haters should put aside their prejudices and get into one hell of a fun FPS.

Meanwhile in Adventuregameland... LucasArts have finally shipped Grim Fandango. A lot is hanging on this game. Adventure games, as a whole, have been pretty lame recently; lame or non-existent. Grim Fandango could resurrect the genre and bring in a horde of new gamers who have been brought up on a strict diet of FPS and RTS games. It's funky and weird and a brave move from LucasArts. Bless 'em.

After a year of dull and boring, now we're suddenly overwhelmed by quality games. Which to buy first? What to ignore completely? These are happy problems, enjoy them because the rich well of gaming will, as usual, probably dry up in a couple of months...

Ben Mansill
Editor



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THE PC POWERPLAY SCORING SYSTEM

95%+	PLATINUM The Best. Virtually faultless, reserved for games which cause loss of sleep from thinking of nothing else.
90-94%	GOLD A classic. Either an unquestionable example of superiority within its genre, or a ground breaking game that'll be setting trends.
80-90%	A strong, eminently playable game. Hard to fault and likely to still be on the hard drive in 6 month's time.
60-80%	Competent and generally enjoyable. Flaws or mediocrity hold these games back from higher ratings.
40-60%	Average and ordinary. Not bad, not good. Ideal gift.
0-40%	Bad, really bad. Boring, shamelessly unoriginal, cheap and horrible.

HALF-LIFE

One word: Awesome! All hail the new King of FPS games



The next contender for the crown of Quake Killer, Half-Life is easily all it's been cracked up to be in the months leading up to the release. It's a game focussed primarily on a strong, immersive storyline and an incredibly detailed game environment melded with gameplay so good that it does the seemingly impossible - it makes the genre feel new and fresh again. Remember that wonderful gooey happy transcendent feeling you got in your tummy the first time you played Doom? Get ready kids, because Half-Life is going to blow you away.

Proper storyline

The story was masterminded by Marc Laidlaw, who wrote the screenplay for Kalifornia (made into a rather excellent film starring Big Brad Pitt and David Duchovny). He certainly hasn't 'dumbed down' his abilities because this time around he's dealing with a computer game though, he's treated the game like any other literary work; it contains scripted 3D sequences that build the story and character development of the anti-hero, a luckless scientist called Gordon Freeman who finds himself in the midst of a failed military experiment.

Basically it sounds like a kind of "Contact" gone wrong scenario where humans discover the secret of teleportation, only to be swamped and overrun by vicious aliens from a remote star system who, coincidentally, have similar technology and used our new discovery to instantly reach us...with their guns blazing. "Whoopsie!"

This whole frightening episode occurs right under your nose, chronicling your escape from the research labs which are now a horrorscape of death, your evasion of the US Marines sent in to "clean" the area and your

eventual travel to the enemy world to bust some serious ass.

Hello...Gordon Freeman

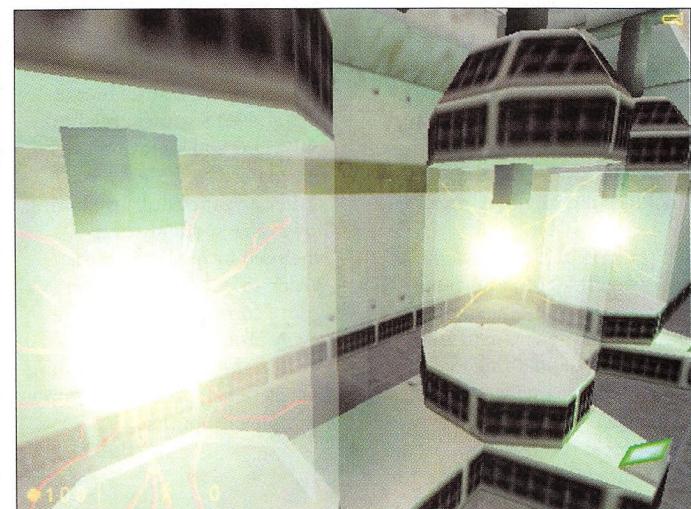
One of the first things evident about Half-Life is that it is alive with non-player-characters (NPCs) who speak with perfect lip sync and left to their own devices will simply go about their duties. You can interact with these guys, enlist their help in combat or use the scientifically oriented NPCs for medical attention, or discover useful information just by approaching them and using the "use" key. It's a very elegant, simple system, the likes of which we've never seen. The level of interaction and the sheer detail with which



version of id software's Quake 2 engine. The Valve engineers have added a host of new features to this tested platform, like 16-bit colour, coloured lighting, blurring, surface translucency, reflective metallic objects, destructible objects, translucent smoke effects and decals (which are effects tex-



It's so fluid, so engrossing, so well scripted, so pretty, so well animated - it's just so everything!

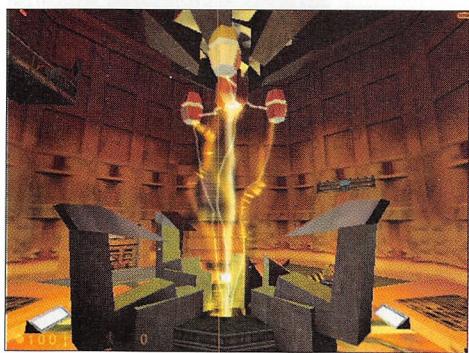
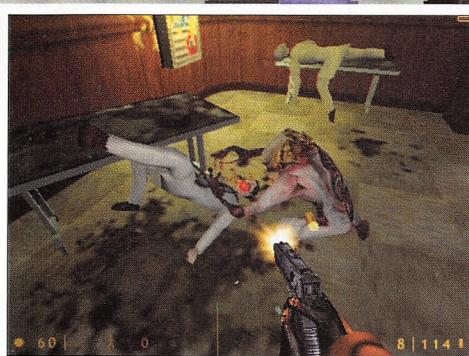


the NPC encounters are handled makes for an experience that other games just can't touch.

Half Life is built on an extensively modified, licensed



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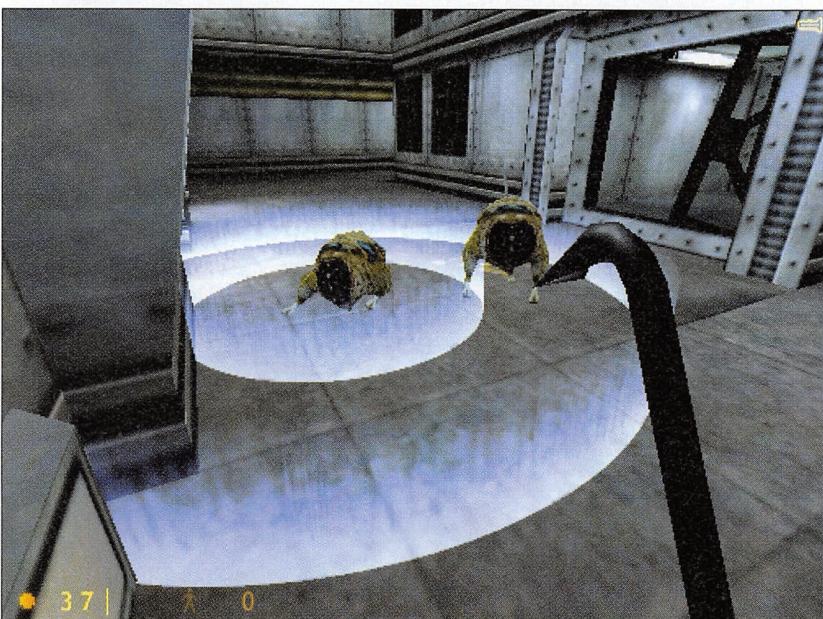
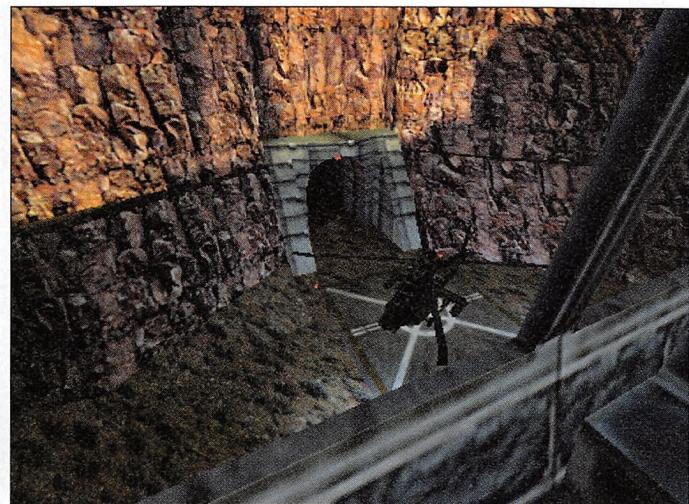
tures "printed" onto any surface such as bullet holes, blood splashes and spray-paint effects!). After large battles levels get really messy-looking, completely blood-soaked, scorched and unrecognisable. There are many destructible objects such as office equipment, vending machines, food in microwaves, glass windows, wooden crates and computers. These things

tend to explode as they are hit during firefights which is always interesting, and again adds another level to the immersion factor.

Animated skeletons

Half-Life's feature graphics breakthrough is the proprietary Skeletal Animation System. This allows 3D characters to be more complex than ever before, with humungous polygon counts (over 6,000 per character), an average of 80 frames of animation for a typical walk cycle (a hell of a lot more than other games) and 20 textures (heaps, heaps more than usual) per monster, animating at 30 frames

per second with hardware acceleration. The end result is closer to photorealistic detail than anything we've ever seen! Skeletal Animation also reduces the render load, allowing more processor time to display super-smooth animation, which has been created for all of Half-Life's creatures and characters. Skeletal Animation also allows quantifiable geographical weapon effects (arms, legs and heads being separately damaged), and numerous death animations, based on where the enemy was shot. More variety, more realism, more immersion - It all adds up to a seriously mind blowing experience.



On top of these mind-blowing effects, Valve committed themselves to incorporating all of the 3D enhanced features into the unaccelerated, software version of the game. Everyone, not just people with 3D accelerators, is able to enjoy the advanced effects in Half-Life (though you will need a fairly grunty machine without a 3D card). And they weren't mucking around! Half-Life's software mode really looks incredible.

Real intelligence

Half-Life also includes some of the most relevant, dangerous and believable intelligence ever incorporated into a 3D environment. Enemies each have their own objectives, group collaboration and a "schedule driven state machine" that sorts their goals by priority. They are adaptive to changing situations, never running out of things to do and standing still, waiting to be killed.

They also have a clear command structure, with dominant creatures commanding groups of lesser beings to do their bidding,

whereby killing the "master" creature causes the "slave" creatures to fall into disarray and lose cohesion. Commando type enemies take advantage of their environment by taking cover, bouncing grenades around corners and performing "pincer" manoeuvres to surround you, blocking your escape routes and setting up crossfires on your position. These guys in particular are an excellent challenge - it feels a lot like a deathmatch, though you're on your own against a team of skilled adversaries. They constantly surprise you with their tactics, and must be treated with respect! The usual John Woo offense that works against most monster AI will quickly see you sleeping with the fishes here.

Even the random insects have intelligence. Walking into a dark room and flicking on the light, you often see a swarm of Cockroaches scattering toward the shadows. They're equipped with rudimentary smarts which makes them favour dark areas, eat dead animals, flock together

and run away from larger creatures. These little details are the things that really set Half-Life apart from the flock.

Purposeful environments

Half-Life's environments sound very original and logically composed. They are built around the premise of a purpose or actual realistic environment, having a predictable layout based around this premise, as opposed to a

myriad of tunnels, stuck together because they look cool and they're fun to play in.

Half Life also has vehicles in-game, both usable and used against you, in particular a level where a gloriously detailed Apache helicopter is strafing you as you run along a treacherous cliff-zone. And then there's the troop-carrier choppers which can be shot down before the troops can rappel down, killing the crew and contents much more easily than if you had to shoot them all individually, as well as operable devices such as cargo trains, lifts and so on.

Another very nice touch and realism enhancing move, rather than have separate levels which you 'finish', every five minutes or so you'll just have to wait a cou-

ple of seconds for the new area to load into memory, and then you're on your way again. In fact, the between-level transitions are almost nonexistent, yet another amazing feature dreamed up by the Valve designers.

It's behind you!

The audio system in Half-Life incorporates Real-time Digital Signal Processing (DSP), which is something like surround sound technology. This should make sounds occur with much more locational accuracy, making it even simpler for players to tell which direction sounds are coming from, be it left, right, below, above, in front, or behind. This all changes in realtime, as the player rotates and moves around, which once again improves the game's immersion and realism. Especially with a 3D sound card you really can tell just where creatures are lurking - on more than one occasion I was jerking my head around to see what was there...

Creature feature

Half-Life sports more than 40 different enemies; everything ranging from lowly cockroaches



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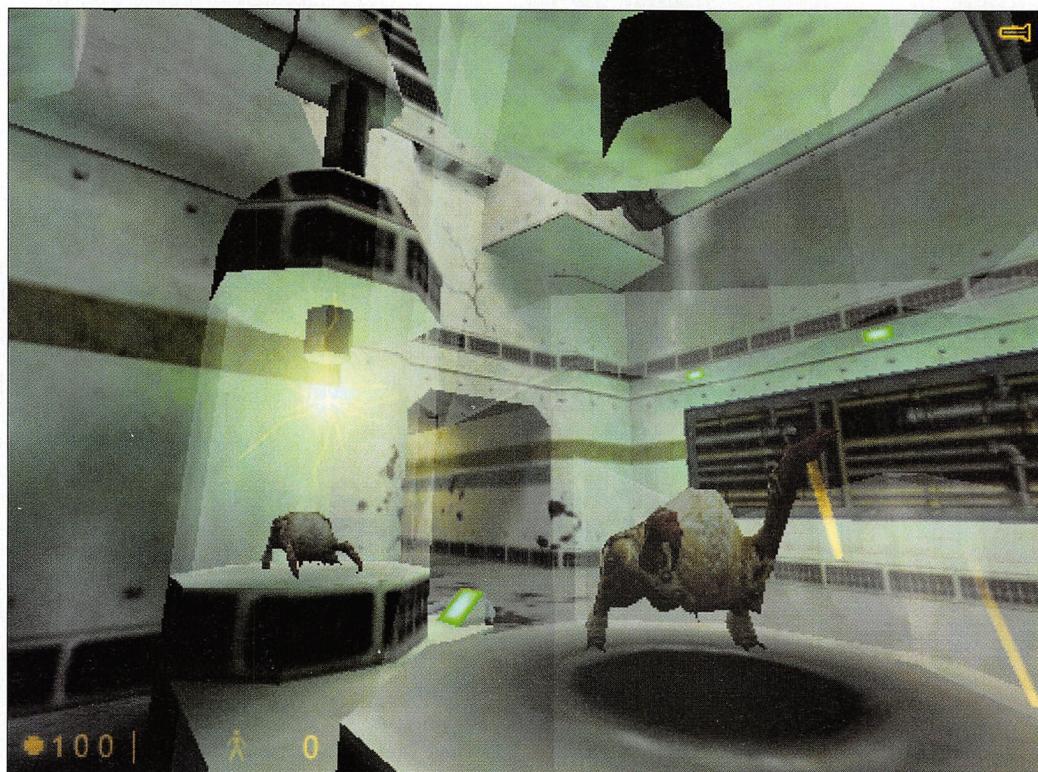
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(left) The face hugger thingies. A lot like the face huggers from Alien, and it's plenty of fun bashing the crap out of them with a crowbar

PLUS+

HalfLife.org

Sunday, October 15th

HalfLife.org

http://www.half-life.org/

One of the many fansites for Half-Life, but one of the best

to the notorious Tentacle, an enormous frightening behemoth. They each have their own special abilities based on their composition: for instance the Ichthyosaur, an aquatic beast that looks like a four-toothed Narwhal-ish nightmare, can jump between bodies of water to snatch terrestrial prey, while Headcrabs (bearing a scary resemblance to the Facehuggers from Aliens) spring through the air in parabolic trajectories as they try to attach themselves to your skull, and a host of others, including the aforementioned Marine troops.

Another, smaller creature, "Mr Friendly" scavenges corpses, explaining the "mysterious disappearance" of dead enemies that is so unrealistically omnipresent in first person shooters. Ever since Doom featured permanent corpses littering hallways, we've been unimpressed by Quake's memory-saving precedent of sudden and mysterious cadaver removal, making each cleared hallway look spotlessly vacuumed seconds after you've filled it with dead, exploded flesh. At least now we have a plausible excuse for this disappearance.

New weapons!

Half-Life boasts 18 weapons, with some funky new ideas like the particle accelerator that fires an atom-wide stream of energy, which cooks anything you hit with it! There is also a strong selection of superb conventional

weapons, including an automatic shotgun, Magnum and Glock pistols, a submachinegun with underslung grenade launcher, tripwire mines, an organic alien weapon that "grows" dangerous flying insects and the Snark, a reptilian beast that runs along the floor, "seeks" a target, bites on and then explodes!

Half-Life's multiplayer mode supports up to 32 players at once, supporting spectators, server filtering and other useful functions. We've yet to see it in action, but apparently the multiplayer maps increase in size as the number of players increases, and then scales back as players depart! This is pretty damn exciting, forever overcoming the Quake dilemma of empty massive maps and ridiculously packed small ones.

Mod city, baby

Half-Life is another engine, like Unreal, that is heavily aimed toward being the best platform for Modification and Total Conversion authors to adapt. Valve software has already acquired the Australian geniuses behind Team Fortress, who are already at work on the second version of their international hit for the Half-Life engine. Valve also hired Ben Morris, author of the best 3rd party Quake level



editor, WorldCraft. This makes it easier for Valve to make their engine more accessible to developers and level designers interested in using the system. They are planning support for many professional modelling tools such as 3D Studio Max and Bones Pro/Character Studio and programming languages like C++ which shortens the learning curve and makes life easier for the creative people who make game "mods" and add-on packs. They are also carefully documenting their engine and development process to make all the information readily available to those people making mods. We can probably expect a wave of add-ons to come flooding out of the Internet gaming community.

Half-Life is an incredible game with the best storyline ever seen in a first-person shooter. The awesome detail of the environments, outstanding weapons and frighteningly intelligent AI make it the most exciting first-person release of the year, and easily the best.

Ed Dawson



Category 1st person shooter
Players 1-32 (IPX, TCP/IP, Modem, Serial)
Publisher Sierra
Price \$89.95
Rating MA15+
Available Now

For The superb storyline, the skeletal animations, the guns, the non-player-characters, the monsters, the gore, the atmosphere, the intense variety of everything, the music, the EVERYTHING!

Against It won't solve the problem of world hunger. Probably.

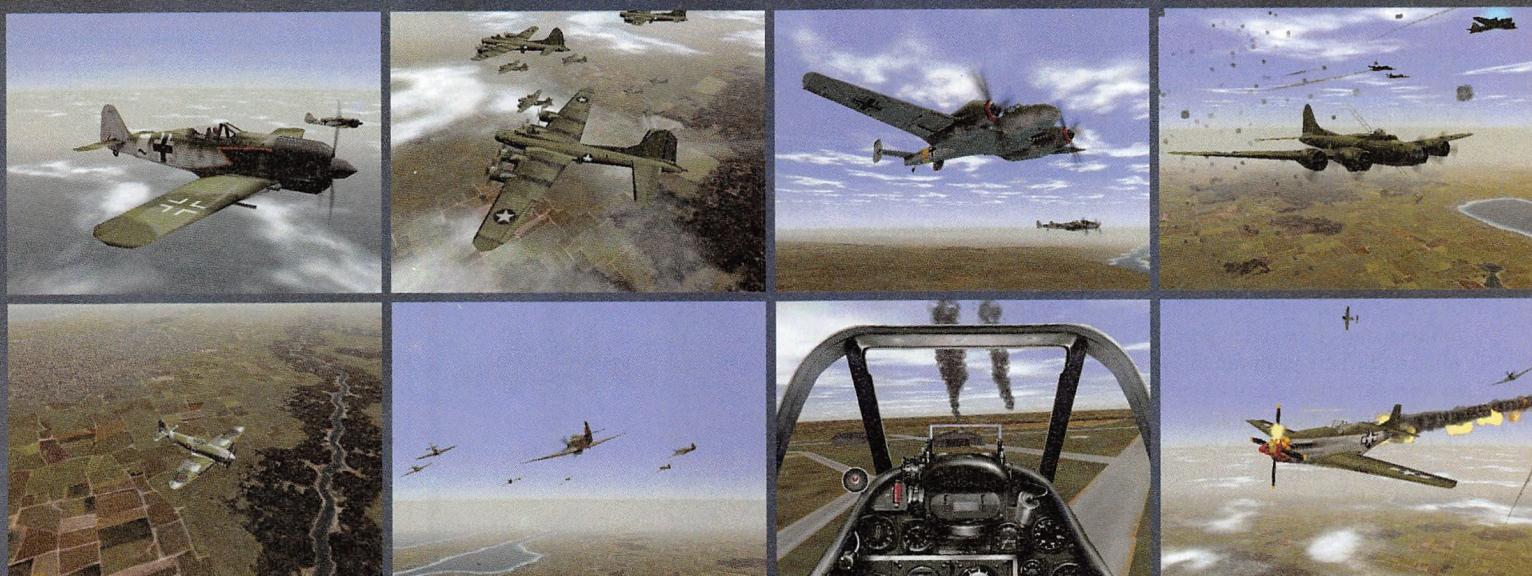
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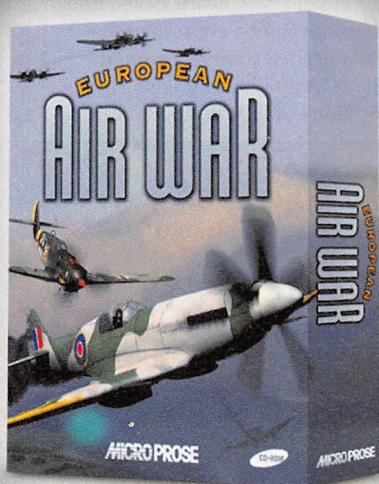
The air war in Europe was responsible for pushing aircraft design to the limit; creating a leap in technology greater than anything experienced before or after.

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EUROPEAN AIR WAR

"Never in the field of human conflict was so much owed, by so many, to so few."

Winston Churchill, August 20, 1940

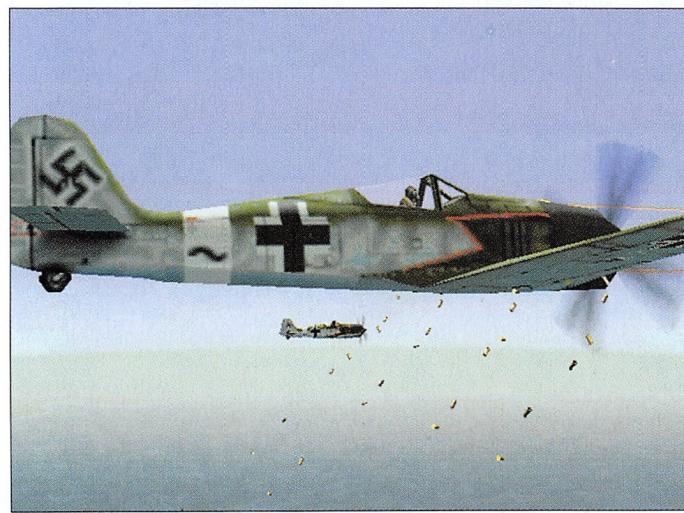
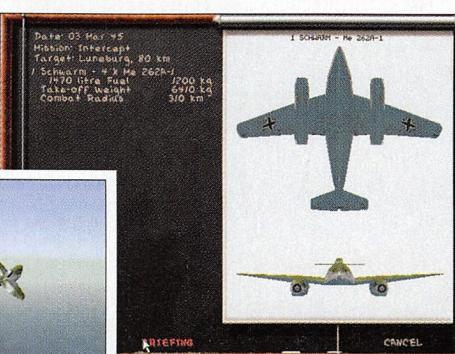
Churchill's quote about the pilots who fought in the Battle of Britain sets the scene for the first cutting edge WWII simulation to hit the shelves this year. European Air War (EAW) lives up to most of the hype surrounding its release; it is what we have been waiting for, and is why I've kept my Sidewinder Force Feedback Pro Joystick close at hand in anticipation of its release.

Fighter Command

EAW provides the standard features such as quick start, single mission, campaign and multi-player options that we are used to. Single Missions are used for training, and allow you to select when and where you want to fly, in what aircraft, under user specified conditions (ie day/night), and what type of mission you want to fly. It then randomly generates a mission, so no two missions are the same. My only criticism of this feature is that you cannot specify the target you want to attack, eg an Ammunition Train, and, as with the rest of the game, it is not enhanced by a Mission Generator to let you alter waypoints etc. Instead, each mission is driven by Bomber and Fighter Command, so you are locked into their waypoints, even when the briefings tell you to fly around the AAA and known fighter base locations. A little disappointing.



Beautiful, beautiful cockpits
(bottom) Note the ejected shell casings



However, the heart of the game is the three campaigns: the Battle of Britain 1940, Europe 1943 and Europe 1944. You take on a role as a German or English pilot in the first campaign, or a German, English or American pilot in the latter two. 20 single and twin-engined aircraft are yours to fly including the Spitfire, Typhoon, Focke-Wulf 190, P38 Lightning, ME 110 and the infamous ME 262 jet fighter. An extraordinary mixture, and in realistic mode each has its own flight model that is clearly discernible. As you move through your career, you go from rank to rank, airfield to airfield and plane to plane.

Another 10 aircraft such as the B17 Flying Fortress, B-24D Liberator, Mosquito and Stuka combine to place up to 256 aircraft in the sky at one time. An awesome sight, no matter which side you are flying for. Enough of the tripe; what is the game like you ask?



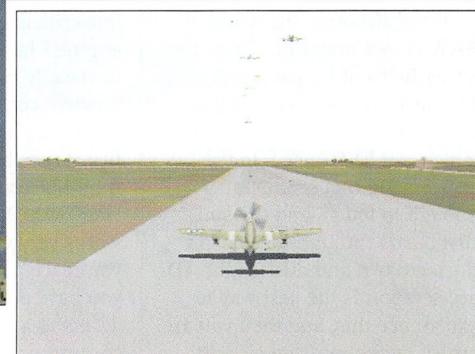
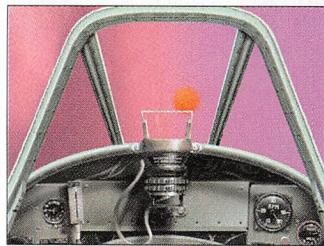
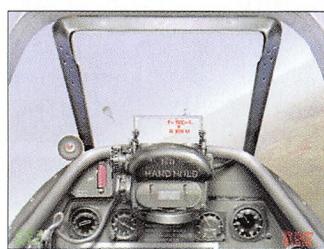
Force Feedback friendly
Plug in the Force Feedback Joystick (FFJ) and wind up the engines to experience a new gaming sensation. The cockpit shakes as the engine coughs, then catches, and the FFJ trembles in your hand until the engine purrs soothingly. Full radio communications support



With up to 256 aircraft modelled simultaneously, EAW can be very exciting to fly!

your taxi to take off, and comes across in the language of the nationality you are flying for. Take off and raise the gear, and the FFJ jumps lightly in your hand on both occasions. It then remains fluid until you manoeuvre, and then you feel the opposing forces.

In the betas, this feature was a shocker and really made my arm ache because it was overdone. Not so in the full game where it is easy to use and adds markedly to the game. It hammers your hand as you fire the cannons, guns or rockets, it whips you to one side if you are hit, and makes it incredibly





Even the interface has an authentic feel

**PLUS+**

hard to pull out of a dive at speed. You can even feel the bump as you land!

It just looks real

Once airborne, the world of EAW is awe-inspiring. From the green fields of England and Europe to the objects on them; trees, barns, windmills, each of which can be targeted; to the layers of cloud that seem real enough to touch, and the sun that burns through the cockpit during dawn and dusk flight. 3D acceleration is the best way to experience this, and then you are struck by the intricate aircraft detail as you fly into formation. Escorting a bomber force is unreal! Fly up close and you can see the flames from the exhausts, the oil running off the wings, the gunners and their guns poking out. Use the many camera views to drool at this sight, and if you dare, stay with them during an engagement and watch each gunner systematically engage the enemy.

To assist your flight you have 40 different mission parameters such as Flight and Target Information that can be projected on screen to assist. Optional HUD, waypoint caret and even a

Target Identification feature further enhance this. Of course, aircraft of this era didn't have these features, but it is best to start with them, because if there is one criticism of the graphics engine I have, it's your inability to visually identify fighters until they are 500m away. Sure, you know they are the enemy if they fire at you, but until then, you might be chasing one of your own. Padlock View works very well, and if you reach a high rank, you have ever-increasing access to a full suite of communications commands to direct your flight or wing to undertake numerous actions such as "Protect Me"! You can also call up land based radar to guide you to bogies.

Kill pilot, kill plane

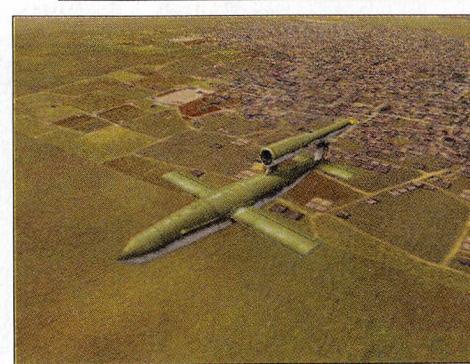
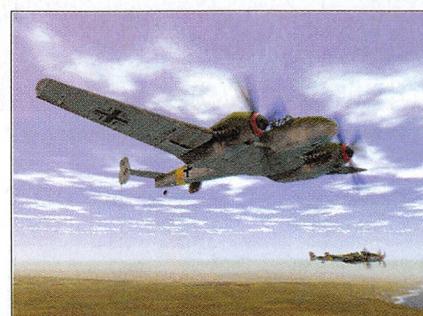
This is where the game starts to really excel. Scream into a wing of bombers and watch them cover you with fire. Aim at an enemy's wing, fire, watch the rounds strike, and

off it will go in a flaming crescendo. Hit the cockpit and blood splattered on the inside usually means only one thing! Flak looks incredible and can even take out a whole B17 with a direct hit! Don't forget the ground action also, the Typhoon's rockets pack a punch on trains and factories when deep strike missions are required.

Sound is brilliant, from the resonating purr of dual engines, to the left to right roar of a fighter strafing you. Cannon hits sound spectacular just as you expect them to, and splinters on the perspex show as you are hit. I've hinted at radio communications before and EAW includes continual radio chatter unless radio silence is ordered. Ground Control might vector you to a target, and it's "Tally Ho" from all the Poms, or "Actung Spifteur" from the Germans, this is followed by calls for help, screams, or warnings if you have forgotten to watch your six. Totally absorbing action.

MicroProse have released a game that is mature, has no bugs that I could see, provides cutting edge gaming entertainment and ushers in the Force Feedback Joystick as a new flight sim necessity.

Maj. Ian Lindgren



<http://www.wpaaf.mil/museum/tours/eto.htm>

I recommend a visit to the US Air Force Museum web site to have a good look at the US aircraft that flew in WWII and other conflicts.

94 %

Category Flight sim

Players 1-8 by LAN

Publisher Microprose

Price \$89.95

Rating G

Available Now

For Mature FFJ Technology. A graphical extravaganza that blows the mind away when you see the sheer size of WWII aircraft formations and the weapons that engaged them.

Against No Mission Generator.

Need P166, 32 MB RAM.

Want P233, 32 MB RAM and 3Dfx card.

3D SUPPORT

3Dfx and D3D

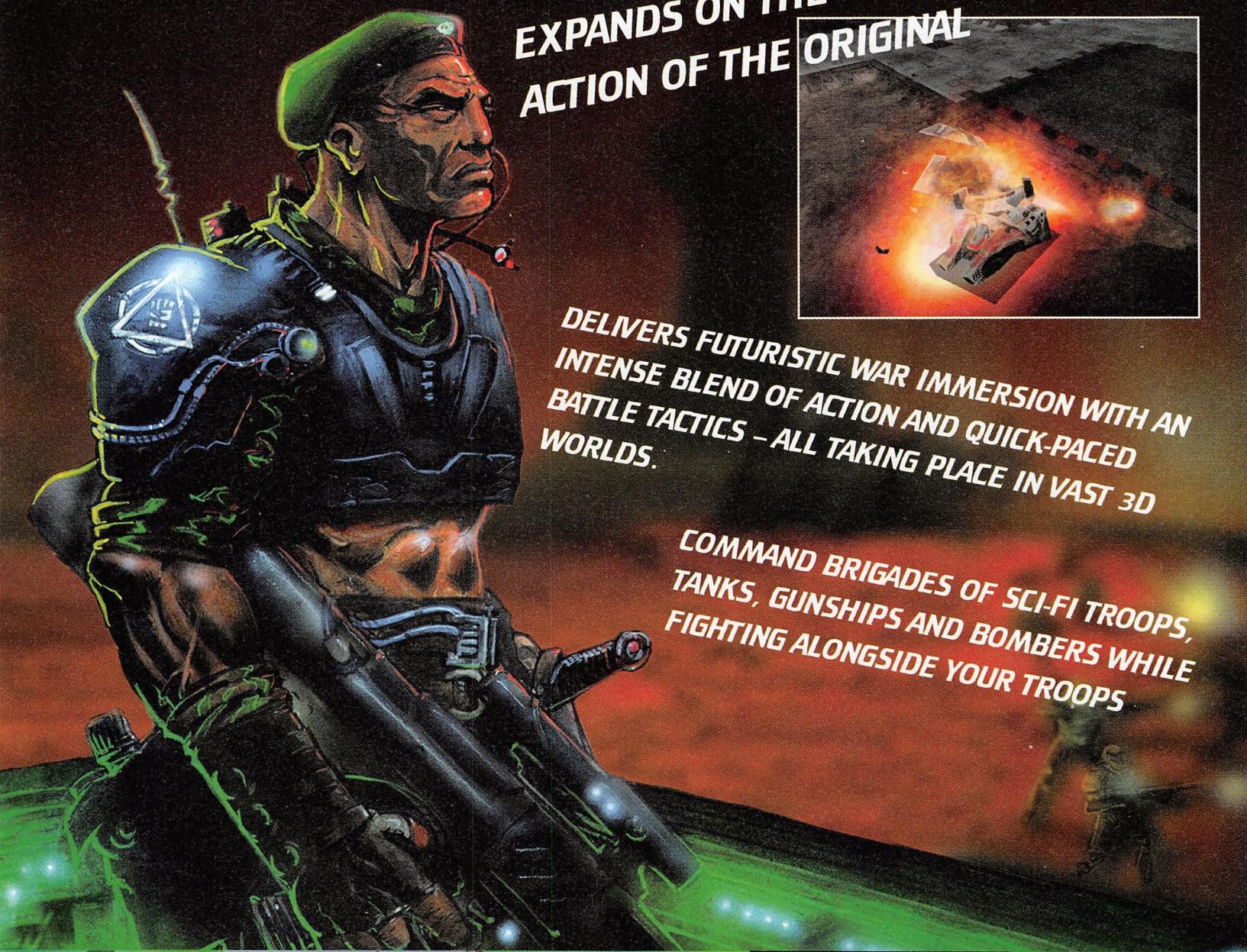
UPRISING² LEAD AND DESTROY

EXPANDS ON THE HEART-POUNDING
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DELIVERS FUTURISTIC WAR IMMERSION WITH AN
INTENSE BLEND OF ACTION AND QUICK-PACED
BATTLE TACTICS - ALL TAKING PLACE IN VAST 3D
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COMMAND BRIGADES OF SCI-FI TROOPS,
TANKS, GUNSHIPS AND BOMBERS WHILE
FIGHTING ALONGSIDE YOUR TROOPS



3DO CYCLONE

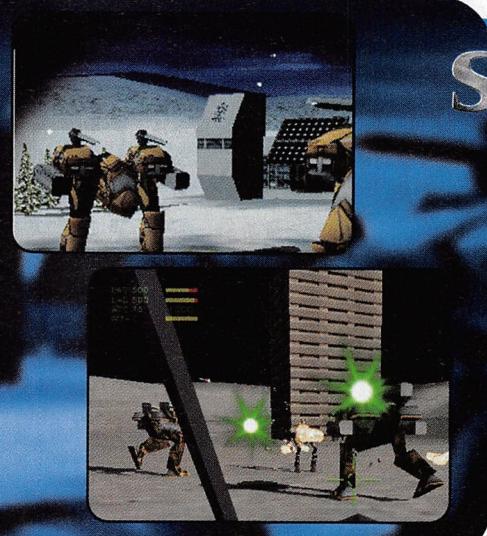


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Directsoft
info@directsoft.com.au

THIS TITLE YET TO BE CLASSIFIED

it's gonna be a ...

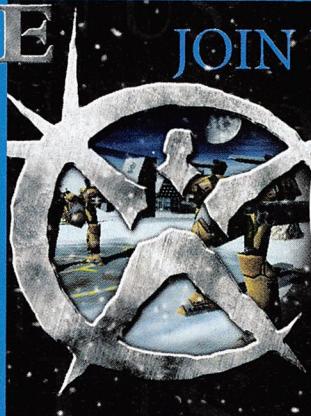


STARSIEGE

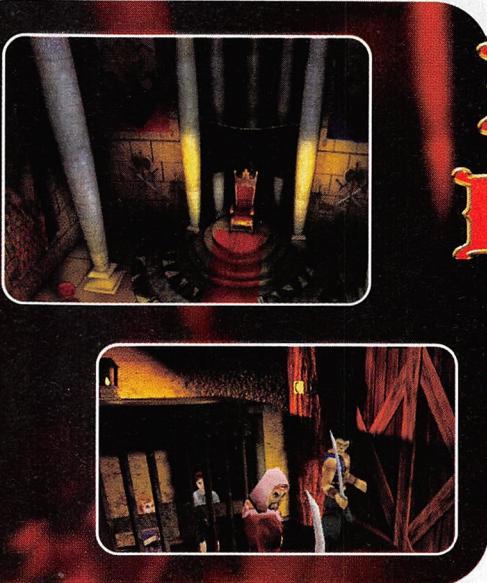
Yanks 3D combat sims into a whole new universe with spectacularly beautiful planets, stunningly realistic vehicles & blazingly fast gameplay.

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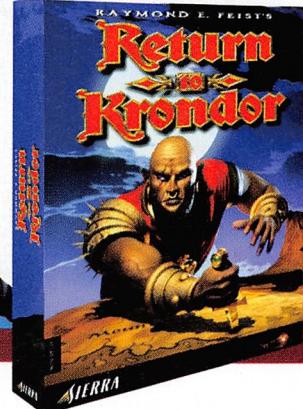
The Earth is
My Mother



Return to Kron dor

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Highly anticipated
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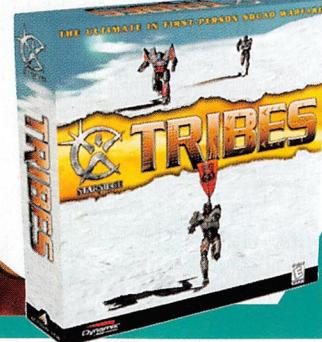


TRIBES

A revolutionary multiplayer, real time, 3D Shooter - the ultimate in first person squad warfare boasting features never seen before in the world of combat games.



TAKE IT FOR
YOUR PEOPLE



When war is a way of life, the warrior is the only way



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Life and death at
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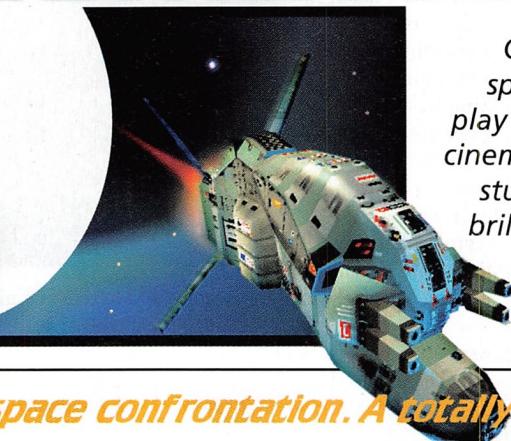
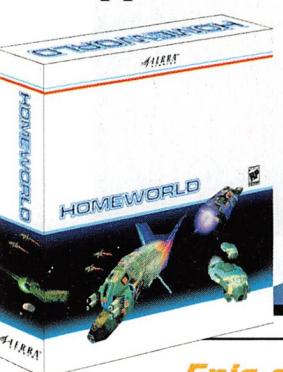
Red Baron 3-D

With full 3D support and a swag of enhancements, the next instalment in the Red Baron series will blow you away.



All Game
No Hype

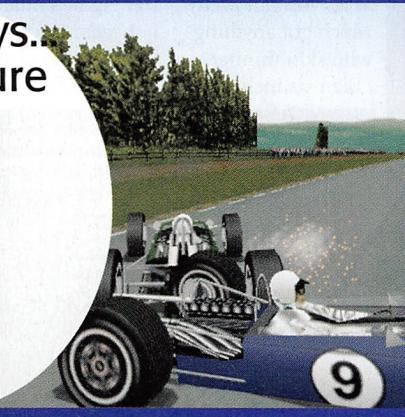
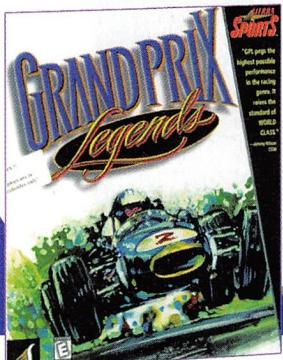
HOMEWORLD



Combines elements of space combat, strategic play and action delivering cinematic-quality graphics, stunning special effects, brilliantly rendered ships and an innovative interface.



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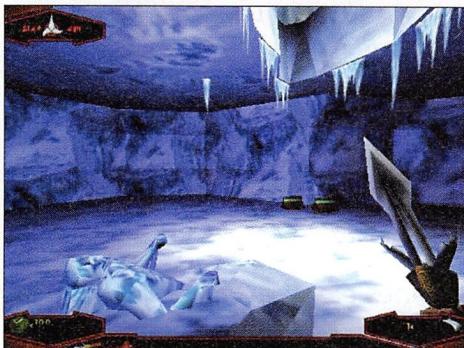


ARTDIR 9276

KLINGON HONOUR GUARD

The power of the Unreal engine combined with the Klingon bloodthirst makes for Qapla!

Aaah, the Klingons. Those interstellar bikies from space. Filled with a lust for hunting, knives, red meat, strong alcohol, fighting and probably heavy metal music. Great stuff! All the Klingons are missing is some flannelette shirts and Utes to get around in, and they'd be right at home in outback Australia. Eating rotisserie kangaroos cooked whole on the spear that killed them. Aaah yes.

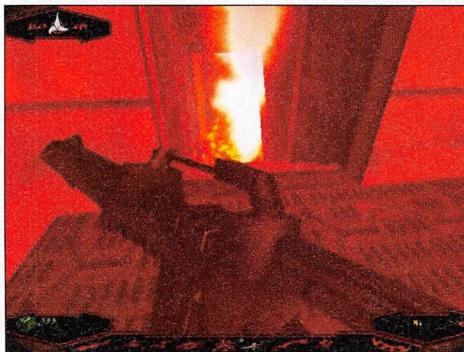


Kirk was a pussy

Playing any first-person action game as a neatly combed Starfleet officer, wielding a compact phaser that bore a strange resemblance to a Remington Philishave never quite got the blood going. But the Klingons, with their metre-long steel blade-studded crescent shaped "Bat-Leth" swords, that's more like it! Klingon Honour Guard perfectly captures the simple and brutal philosophy of the Klingon ways, never complicating anything.

The Klingons, for those who don't know, place honour over all else. Mix feudal Japanese warriors with the roughest Western bikers from the seventies, and that's the Klingons. The game goes into a great amount of detail, and really fleshes out the subject matter. Playing this game you really begin to understand the sometimes incomprehensible Klingon behaviour on Star Trek. It all makes sense within the game. You BECOME a

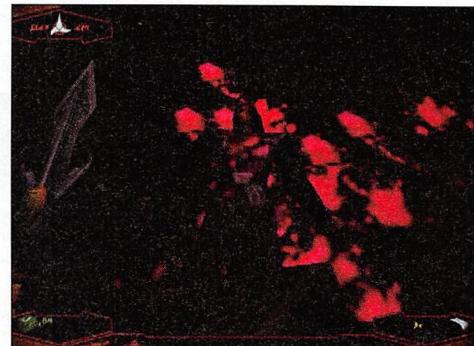
Klingon. Pride is your blood right. Extreme arrogance naturally drives your every move. Enemies you flatten in equal combat will meet you in the honourable afterlife, Sto-Vo-Kor! You believe all this and more in the atmospheric world of Klingon Honour Guard.



Multiple melee weaponry

The arsenal of weaponry is really something you can sink your teeth into. Simple, sharp and explosive, you can unleash all of your animal rage with this gear. Firstly the chunky sharp metal things are actually extremely useful weapons, in contrast to the norm for the default weapon. Basically, because the average Klingon makes Dolph

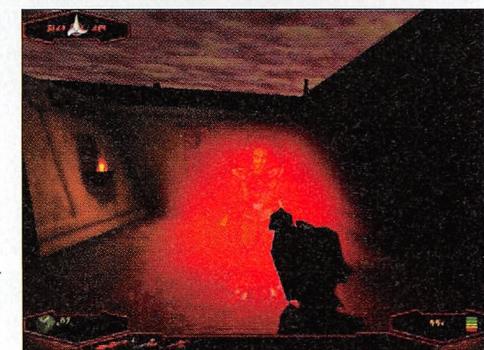
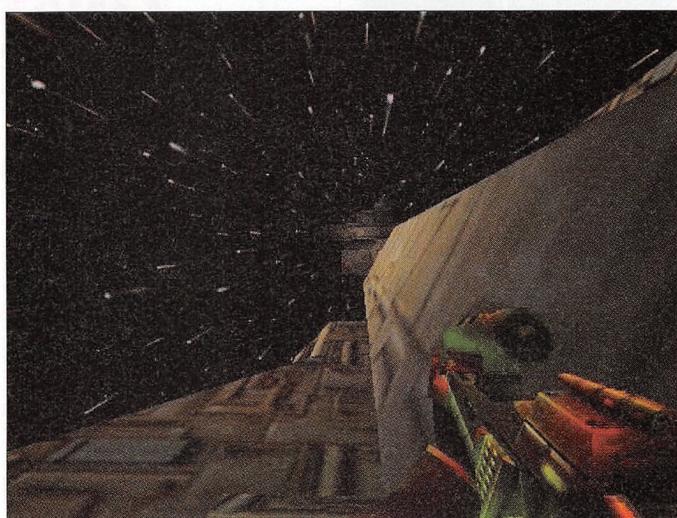
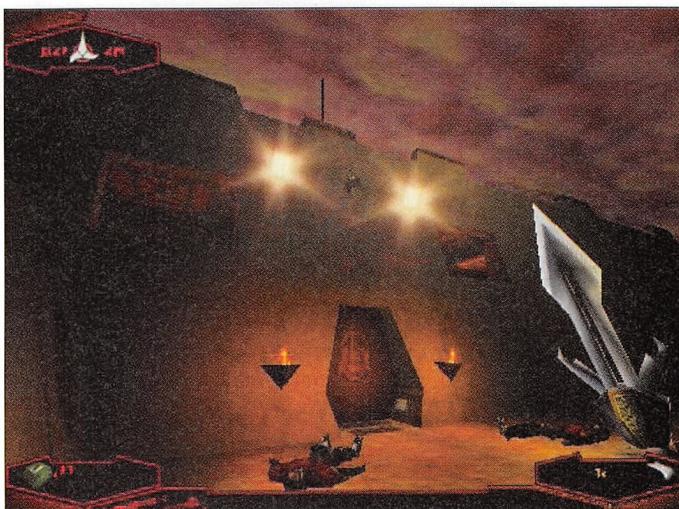
Lundgren look like a milk-fed runt, wielding a melee weapon in your tree-trunk arms you can pretty much gut anything with skin thinner than six inches!



There is the nifty little dagger, the "Dk-Tagh", which can be thrown as well as wielded. An interesting feature to note is the stealth-kill when throwing the Dk-Tagh. If your enemy is not aware of your presence, you can effect an instant kill by throwing this weighted little blade into their heads. Once alerted, however, you cannot do nearly as much damage, and should stick to slashing

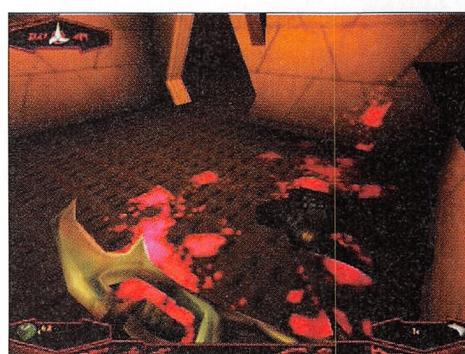
There's even a rather detailed and evolving storyline! But nobody really cares about that, we just want gory killing bits!





and stabbing. The Bat-Leth, mentioned above, is a bit like a bull-bar cut in half with an oxy torch. A semicircular frame with four sharp bits sticking off it, it really hurts when dragged along flesh at high speed. It is much heavier than the Dk-Tagh, hence it packs a real punch when thrown. If you manage to hit an oncoming foe with a thrown Bat-Leth, all that remains to do is pull it out of their ribcage and wipe it. The other blade weapon, the Ding-Pach, is almost an exact replica of the frisbee blade used by the Predator. It flings out of its magnetic launcher, bounces at angle

Though the levels of KHG are mostly smaller than those in Unreal, you can go outside the ship in your EVA suit in KHG. Way cool!



of incidence about six times then returns, like Thor's hammer, to your hand.

Guns go bang

The other weapons are a mix of energy and explosive stuff. There are three blaster style guns, the weakest being almost identical to the dispersion pistol from Unreal, as in it has infinite ammo which slowly regenerates. Its secondary fire is a scatter shot that does more damage although it wastes energy. There is a rapid-fire version of that, which takes Dilithium ammo, also shared by a shotgun-style "particle dispersal cannon"

at the top of that ladder. Secondary fire of that weapon creates a miniature black hole, which sucks in everything in line of sight, then crushes it all at once.

Then there is the requisite grenade and rocket launcher, with alternate fire modes of blinding

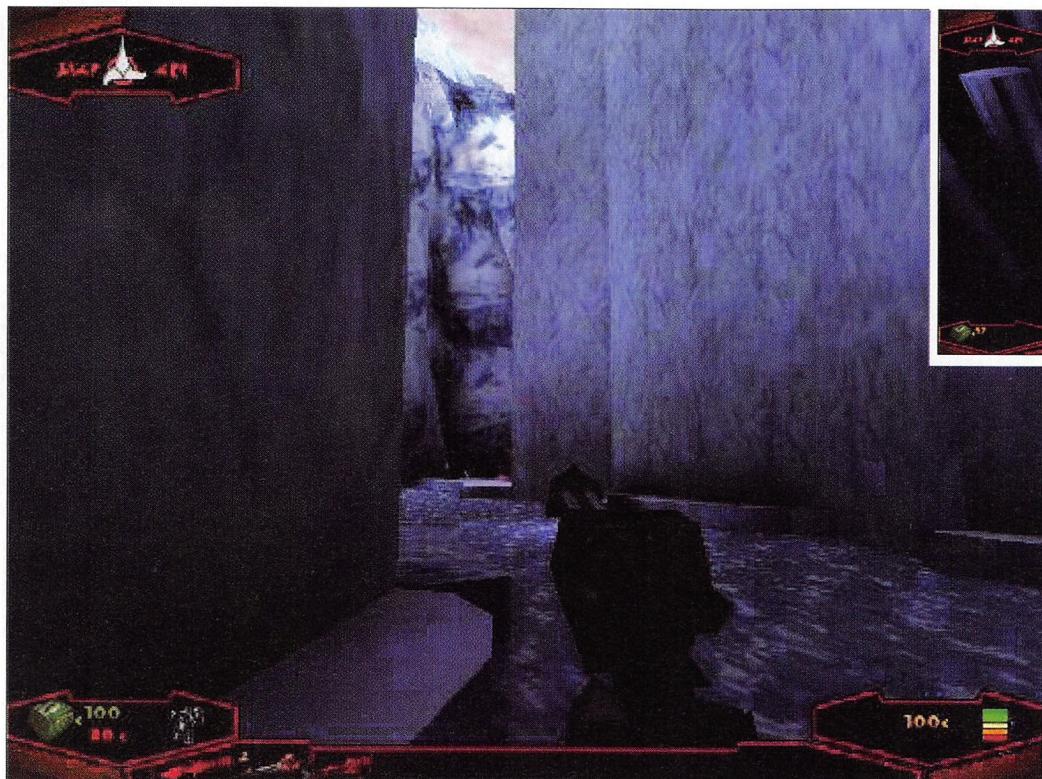
"flash" grenades, and heat-seeking intelligent rockets. All the weapons are very nicely done, being quite well balanced for deathmatch while being easier to use and more satisfying than the Unreal weapons.

The items are fairly standard, although the anti-grav suit and the magnetic boots combined allow you to go EVA, or "space-walk" in some levels, which is excellently done. Other tools include a stealth suit that makes you appear translucent and invulnerability "bloodwine" which you drink and then go medieval.

Less complexities

The levels are purposely less complex than the architecture-major-works from Unreal, as Honour Guard has much more





The quest is on to find the mysterious secret level, where you get to confront and kill those pesky Starfleet officers

PLUS+

Star Trek: Klingon Honor Guard

Honor is more important than life.

This game uses Microprose's Flash Plug-in. Don't have Flash? You can get it here.

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http://www.microprose.com/gamesdesign/khg_site/



realistic system requirements. The one exception is the ship level where you can go external, which looks simply incredible. Geometrically they are quite simple, but very nice textures help to offset this. Objectives remain as basic as key retrieval and switch-pressing, but by now we're well used to that. The combat comprises most of the game, but considering it's so much fun to fight with the cool weapons, that's OK. Just don't expect any

mensa-style problem solving or logical solution finding and you'll enjoy it just fine.

Klingon humour

Mid-level, there are AVI briefings from your commander, with simple maps and objectives laid out, and footage of hostile takeovers, etc. The story is an intra-Klingon saga about political intrigue and double-crossing, which you must put right in a torrent of pink blood.

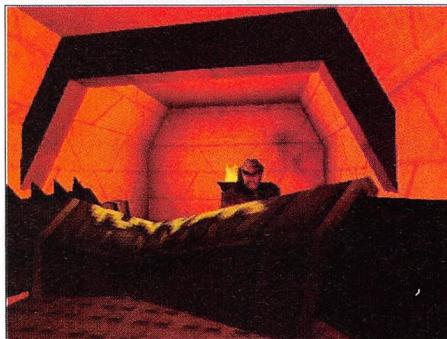
Klingon Honor Guard has some cool "atmos" bits, like the evil guttural laugh you emit when breaking out a blade weapon and comments like "Hmm, smells like smoked Bricket!" when you've vaporised an enemy. Blood splashes out of foes,

temporarily staining the walls and hitting enemies in the head results in faster kills.

Disembowel Kirk!

The range of enemies, unfortunately is quite limited. Most of them are variations on a Klingon theme, Klingon terrorists, soldiers, florists, parking officers, and so on. They do however fight with at least the same ferocity as the Unreal foes, though perhaps less acrobatically. They do pick weapons for situations and change tack when heavily injured, digging in and taking cover. There is one other race of generic muscular alien things, which act and die in a very similar fashion to the aforementioned. There are a few giant beasts and attack pigs, which are both quite impressive, the giants especially throwing boulders pulled from the earth. Still, it's a shame you can't throttle Will Riker or disembowel Captain Kirk, as the gameplay never leaves the domain of the Klingon Empire, but the combat is very good fun indeed. It's a simple, fun combat game about space rednecks.

Ed Dawson



84 %

Category 1st person shooter
Players 1-16 (IPX, TCP/IP)
Publisher Microprose
Price \$89.95
Rating MA15+
Available Now

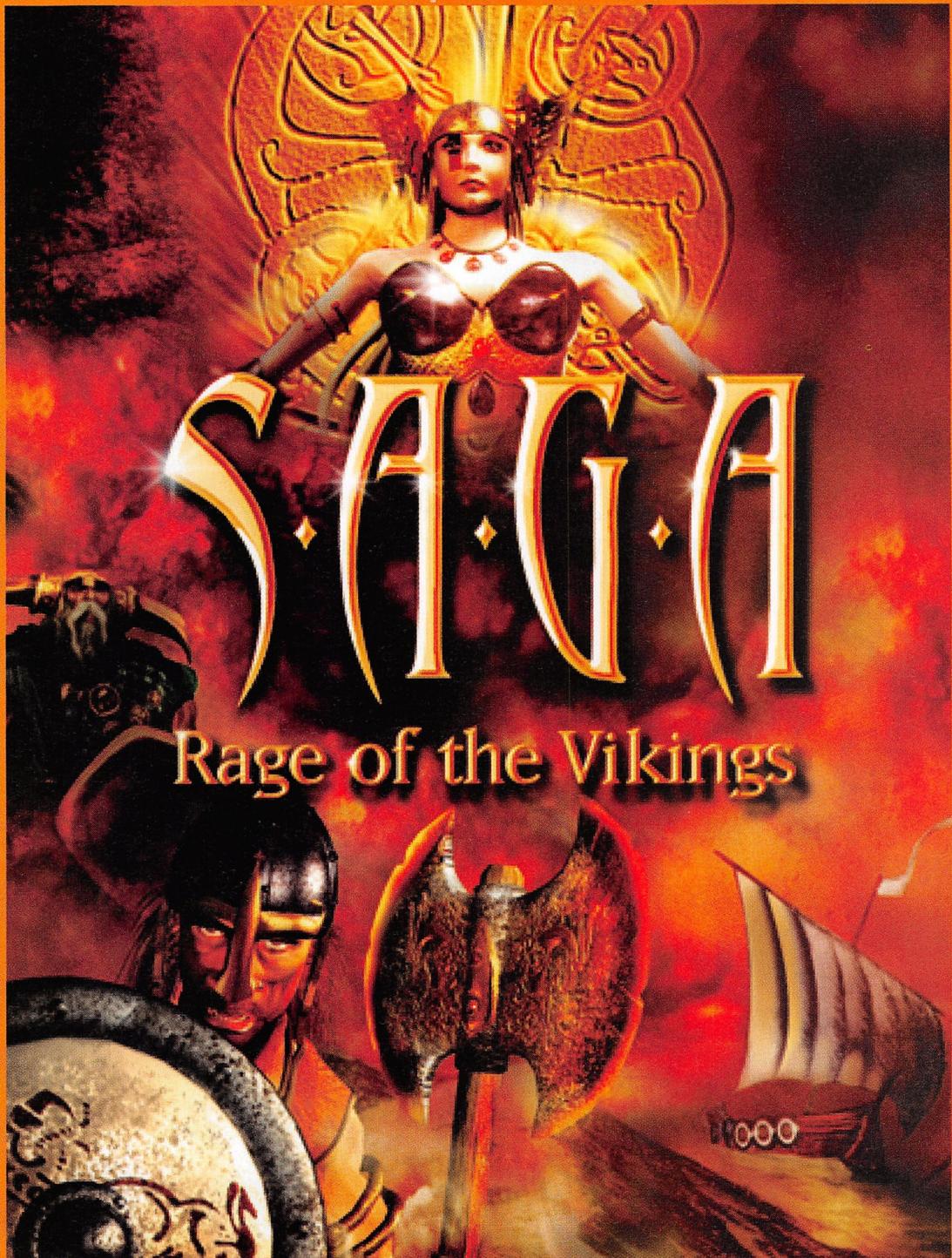
For Wonderful characterisation, cool visceral thrills of extreme carnage in a Star Trek setting.

Against No shootouts with pissy human Starfleet officers, simple mission structure, small range of enemies.

Need P166, Windows 9x, 32MB RAM, 4xCD, SVGA card with 2MB RAM

Want PII-266, 64MB RAM, 4MB Direct3D compatible graphics accelerator

3D SUPPORT
 Like Unreal, 3Dfx and major accelerators supported.



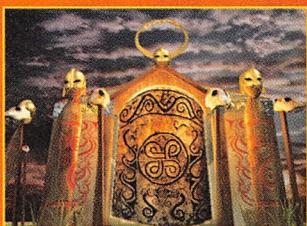
The strategy game that places you right in the middle of the fearsome universe of the Vikings, their majestic legends and their mysterious beliefs. Available soon on PC CD-ROM.



A FANTASTIC
UNIVERSE FEATURING
AMAZING GRAPHICS
AND 3 DIFFERENT
LEVELS OF ZOOM.



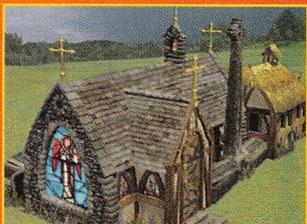
THE VIKING SENSE
OF HONOUR WILL
SHOW YOU THE WAY.



TEMPLES WILL
PROVIDE YOU WITH
MAGICAL POWERS
COMMENSURATE WITH
YOUR SACRIFICES.



EACH RACE
POSSESSES ITS OWN
CHARACTERISTICS,
LOOK & STRENGTHS.



GRIM FANDANGO

LucasArts have come to save us all from dull adventure games.

I'd always thought that when I died there would be a giant white Cadillac convertible there to pick me up. There would be some chicks who died young and pretty in the back seat waiting to tell me about all the great things I could do now that I was dead. And all my favourite dead musos would be on a stage nearby performing all their best songs. Maybe all my dead former pets could be there too, as well as my dead friends and family of course. And then they'd take me to the great mega games room in the sky where I'd realise that real life was really just a LAN game called 'Bollocks' being played by all the dead people in heaven.

The hell train

Boy was I wrong. You see this is how it works. When you die one of the souls from the eighth level of the afterlife come to pick you up. These are the souls of people who haven't been, well, saintly in life and they have to work off their debt by acting as salesmen. What they sell are travel plans for the dead souls who have to find their way to heaven. If you've been, shall we say, less than good your record will only make you eligible for a budget plan, ie a walking stick. If on the other hand you've been a saint in life then you're booked straight in for the number 9 train. The journey to heaven normally takes four years, the number 9 will get you there in 4 minutes. Better clients earn more points for these salesmen and shorten their contract with the company (the Department Of Death or DOD)

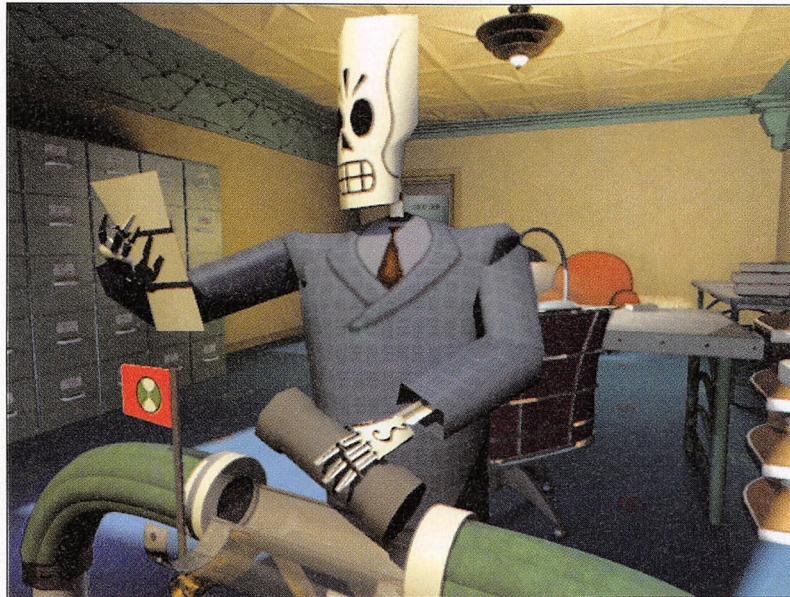
Dirty dead deeds

And this is where our story begins. You play the part of Manny Calavera, a salesmen in desperate need of some juicy

clients to earn his way out of the company. You feel that other employees are getting the best clients and so decide to take matters into your own hands by stealing one from the top salesman in the company. And that is when you discover that something is very wrong in the town of El Marrow! Someone is stealing the just rewards

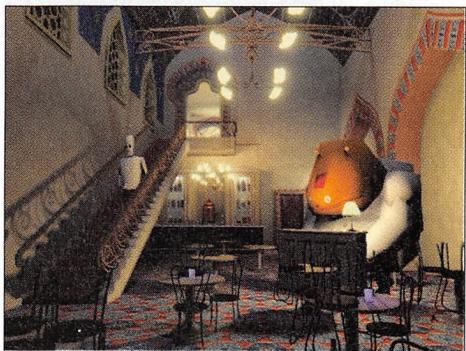
Wonderfully bizarre, Grim Fandango is of the same calibre of all the Lucas Arts adventures

of souls who would otherwise be getting a ticket on the number 9, removing their records from the computer system and selling the tickets to those whose souls are less than perfect. Your stolen client,



Mercedes Collomar, is such a soul, and now she's lost on a four year walk to the final portal and you have to catch up with her to try to figure out what is going on.

For the many fans of 'Full Throttle', 'Day Of The Tentacle' and LucasArts' other great adventure titles Grim Fandango



is a long awaited and treasured item. Lucas have justifiably built a pretty big fan base from their earlier releases and while Grim Fandango is quite different to those titles, I'm sure it

Fandango doesn't have all the humour of Sam and Max or Day Of The Tentacle and the theme of the game itself is quite bizarre and I suppose more 'adult'

won't disappoint. Rather than continue with the youthful tone of their earlier adventure titles Lucas have chosen to grow up a bit, along with the people who would have also played those games. While still being amusing at times Grim

Mexican folk art
What the developers (Tom Schafer of Full Throttle and DOTT fame) have concentrated on is atmosphere, narrative and immersion. The characters in the game are well developed and engaging and the storyline is more detailed and compelling than any Lucas Arts have attempted before. Lucas have also borrowed heavily from what was originally an Aztec mythology, now more associated with Mexico, to add

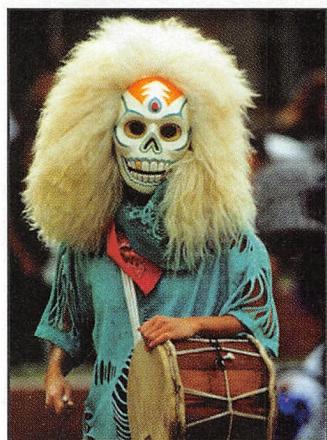
**Can a skeleton look erotic?
You betcha! Show me that bone, baby!**

flavour to the mix. 'The Day Of The Dead' is part of ancient Aztec culture and its imagery and





If only there was a slightly better way to deal with conversation in adventure games rather than selecting questions from a list. Bother!

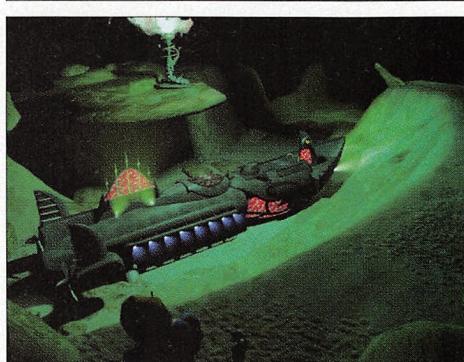
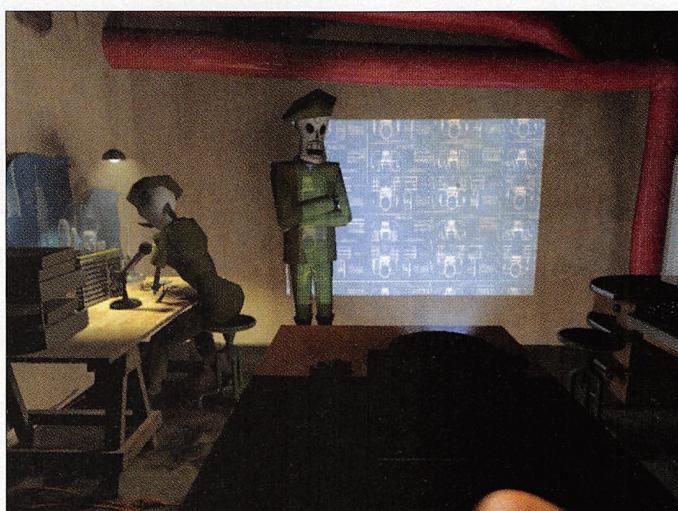


El Dia de los Muertos - The Day Of The Dead

El Dia de los Muertos, the day departed souls return to earth, is one of the biggest events in Mexico. It is a time for families to honour their ancestors rather than fear death. "The Day of the Dead" spawned from the Aztec Indian month of Micailhuitontli. Prior to the Spanish conquest, festivities overseen by the goddess Mictecacihuatl, the Lady of the Dead, took place in the summer. This month long celebration commemorated children, the deceased, and the Aztec war god Huitzilopochtli.

During the celebration death's morbidity is buried beneath mountains of colourful marigolds, glowing candles, and lavish picnic spreads. Families spend the night mingling in necropolis, sharing in a dusk-to-dawn delight which often includes a pyrotechnic display in the evening. Tequila toasts, corpse-like costumes, and mariachi music are also common. As the 2nd day draws near celebrants don ghoulish costumes and parade through town, scaring the spirits back to their eternal dwelling spots.

Cities who still celebrate Dia de los Muertos on a grand scale are often regions where both the Spanish and Indian cultures continue to flourish side by side. Oaxaca, Mexico is one locale where the tradition strongly survives.



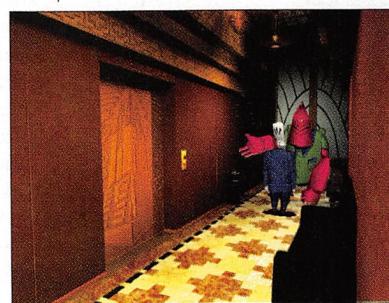
philosophy have been used to create the 'feel' of the game. The depiction of the characters as skeletons is taken straight from Mexican folk art and some of the ideas in the game as to the structure of the afterlife are borrowed from 'Day Of The Dead' mythology as well. Lucas Arts have even gone to the trouble of hiring Latin American voice talent to give an authentic Latin lilt to the game's audio.

Graphically Grim is quite stunning, with or without an accelerator card, and the mixture of Aztec and Art Deco architecture and styling makes for some very nice eye candy. There are around 90 locations in the game, 55 characters and over

7000 lines of dialogue so it isn't hard to see why it took Lucas so long to produce this new wonder. How long it will take to finish depends on your cunning and resourcefulness. Grim Fandango does suffer from some of the usual problems with this

genre: Conversations are just a selection of statements that you click through one at a time and a few of the puzzles just aren't logical. But overall, considering the size and scale of this project, Lucas have again done a superb job, are easily the best in this field, and fans of their adventure titles will not be disappointed.

George Soropos



PLUS+

GRIM FANDANGO
The Epic Tale of Crime and Corruption in the Land of the Dead
Land of the Dead News
http://www.lucasarts.com/products/grim/grim_spotlight.htm
Lucas Arts' GF site

<http://www.azcentral.com/ent/dead/about.shtml>
Day Of The Dead site

91%

Category Graphic Adventure
Players 1
Publisher LucasArts
Price \$89.95
Rating G8+
Available Now

For Engaging storyline, superb graphics and mostly logical puzzles will keep you playing and having fun for ages. A sophisticated treat for 'grown up' gamers.

Against Only the usual genre gripes, not much freedom in conversations and some of the puzzles are just plain silly, only solvable by blind luck. But there are thankfully only a few of those.

Need P90, 16 Mb RAM, 4X CD, Win 95

Want P166, 3Dfx, 32 Mb RAM, 24X CD

PINBALL HEAD TO HEAD

FOR THE FIRST TIME EVER!

SET YOUR FINGERS FLYING AND YOUR SENSES REELING BY EMBARKING ON THE MOST NAIL-BITING ADRENALINE-PUMPING PINBALL EXTRAVAGANZA EVER TO HIT THE HIGHWAYS. Oozing character and originality from every pore, BIG RACE USA WILL LEAVE YOUR WHEELS SPINNING AND YOUR HEART POUNDING.

- The first pinball game EVER to include a real-time "head-to-head" mode for exciting two player action (via LAN and Internet)
- Fun "road trip across America" theme, featuring 16 major cities as play zones, is brought to life with fantastically detailed 3D graphics
- Multi-ball feature allows up to 10 BALLS in play at one time
 - Innovative Dot Matrix screen provides "game within the game" action
- Customizable table slope, flipper strength, outlane size, slingshot power and tilt sensitivity
- Loaded with features and surprises around every turn

ACTUAL SCREEN SHOT! ↗

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LOW LEVEL
ANIMATED VIOLENCE

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BIG RACE
USA

PC
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RIVERWORLD

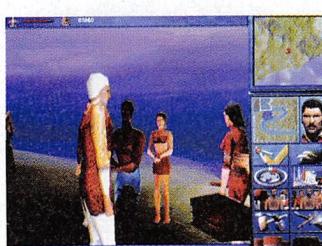
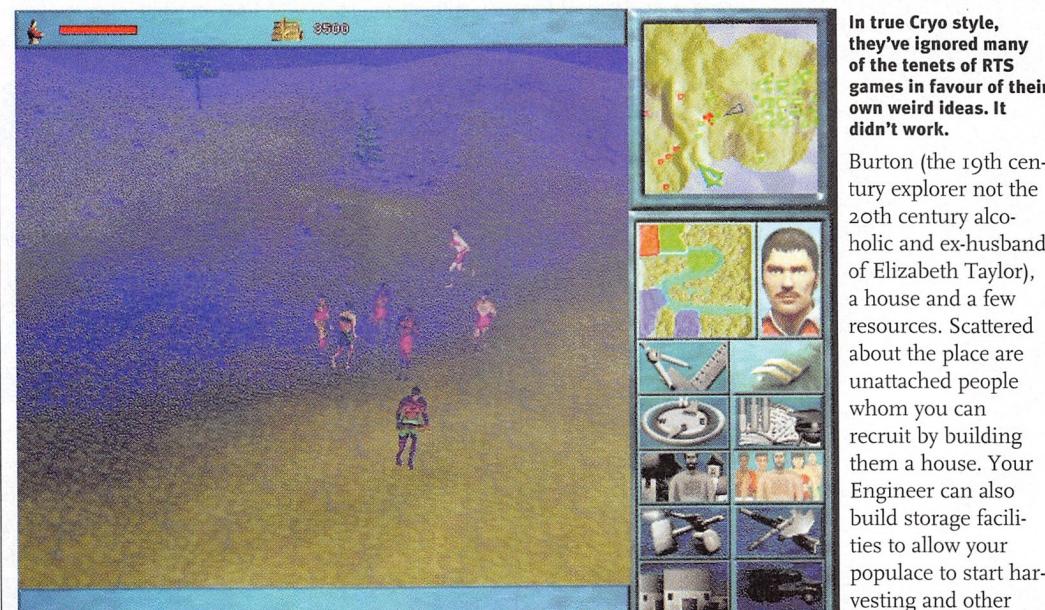
Cryo try to sell us up the river again

What can you say about those unflappable Frenchmen? They try very hard and they've even succeeded a few times, but more often than not they just miss the mark - usually due to some really minor, obvious error or omission that sends everything out of kilter. For example, in 1998, four generations of real time strategy games have already established perfectly good, sensible and necessary protocols to make gameplay as intuitive as possible. Who would completely ignore those protocols, flout every lesson learned by every RTS developer in the last five years and produce a game which, because of these omissions, is virtually unplayable? Cryo of course! Vive La Difference!

Read, then play

Some of you might be familiar with the name Riverworld, that's because it's been borrowed from Philip Jose Farmer's novel of the same name. That isn't to say that Riverworld the game has a story attached to it, instead the developers have basically used Farmer's imagination to create the game world for them. Call it a short cut.

Cryo claim to have created a new genre in 3D real time strategy, and as we all know that's a load of crap. All of you will be familiar by now with titles like Battlezone, Myth, Uprising and Urban Assault. Riverworld has elements of all these games but to be fair does actually push the



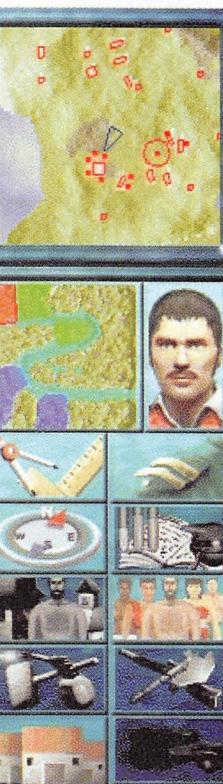
envelope a bit further by including a lot more unit and building types than any of these games, as many as a typical 2D RTS title in fact.

The heart of the game lies in capturing new territories by taking possession of the Grail Stone in that territory. Each map is divided up into different regions, some of which your two oppo-

nents have usually already grabbed. There are always two opponents to defeat on every map as you work your way up river to try and find the ultimate secret of Riverworld.

Recruitment

When you begin a game you are situated in a single territory with your leader, Richard Francis



In true Cryo style, they've ignored many of the tenets of RTS games in favour of their own weird ideas. It didn't work.

Burton (the 19th century explorer not the 20th century alcoholic and ex-husband of Elizabeth Taylor), a house and a few resources. Scattered about the place are unattached people whom you can recruit by building them a house. Your Engineer can also build storage facilities to allow your populace to start harvesting and other buildings to make

tools and weapons. Your diplomat can talk to your opponents and make treaties or prevent wars, Merchants and Soldiers build markets and military installations, and finally Explorers are used to find special characters in the game who can upgrade your knowledge and tech level.

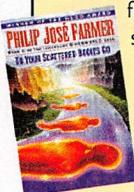
There are four technological ages which you evolve through



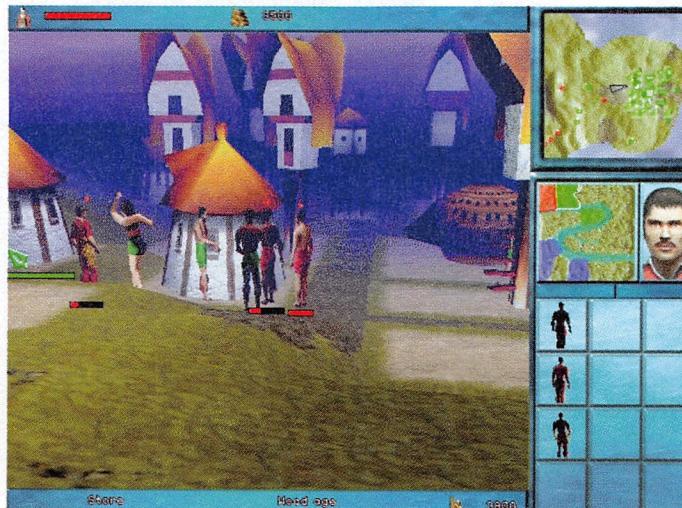
as you play. Each one has a different resource to be harvested (which appears in your territories when you move into the new age), new buildings and units to construct and new enemy leaders to challenge you. Compared to other 3D RTS games Riverworld does actually have a large number of building and unit types, some of which are pretty cool to look at and hoon around in (the little sea plane for example).

Philip Jose Farmer

has written more than 100 Science Fiction books, none more original than the fantastic Riverworld Series. 'To Your Scattered Bodies Go' is the first of the five books in this series.



Imagine a planet on which the hundreds of billions of people who have died from the dawn of man right up to 1983 have been reincarnated. They all possess the body of a 20 year old, but they also have full memory of their life on Earth. Placed on the shores of a ten million mile long river by strange alien benefactors Richard Burton, explorer, embarks on a journey to find out just what the hell is going on. A classic Sci-Fi series (of five books) and a must for any fan of the genre.



Playtest? What's that?

Well all that sounds pretty cool, huh? The problem comes in the form of an interface which simply makes it too hard to play the game for any length of time. Firstly there are no keyboard hotkeys, none, zero, zilch. Everything has to be done with the mouse, and as you can imagine with a 3D game of this complexity, that's a recipe for disaster! As soon as you start to build up your little corner of the world to any decent level things start going wobbly. You just can't keep track of everything as quickly as you need to, and if you get attacked forget it! To make matters worse you can only adjust the camera position in the main game screen by clicking on the actual map terrain or on the minimap. This makes fine adjustment of your viewpoint an ungodly fiddly and inaccurate

practise, and really annoys when you're in combat.

To make fighting even more painful your citizens can only be armed by clicking on a weapon in the armoury screen and then clicking on a citizen. As I have just mentioned you have to scroll the game screen around with the minimap, consequently arming your citizens in time to defend your Grail Stone from attack is usually more difficult than trying to slide your wedding tackle painlessly through a garbage disposal unit.

It's all a bit sad really, because the Phillip Jose Farmer books provide a great storyline, and in many ways the execution of the game is good. It's just that the control method and interface leaves so much to be desired, and this really ruins all the enjoyment.

George Sorops



What's at the end of the game?
What's the final mystery that's solved? If you've read the books, you're in for a surprise

PLUS+



www.cryo-interactive.com/new/english/frames/frame.htm

65 %

Category Real Time Strategy

Players 1

Publisher Cryo

Price \$TBA

Rating TBA

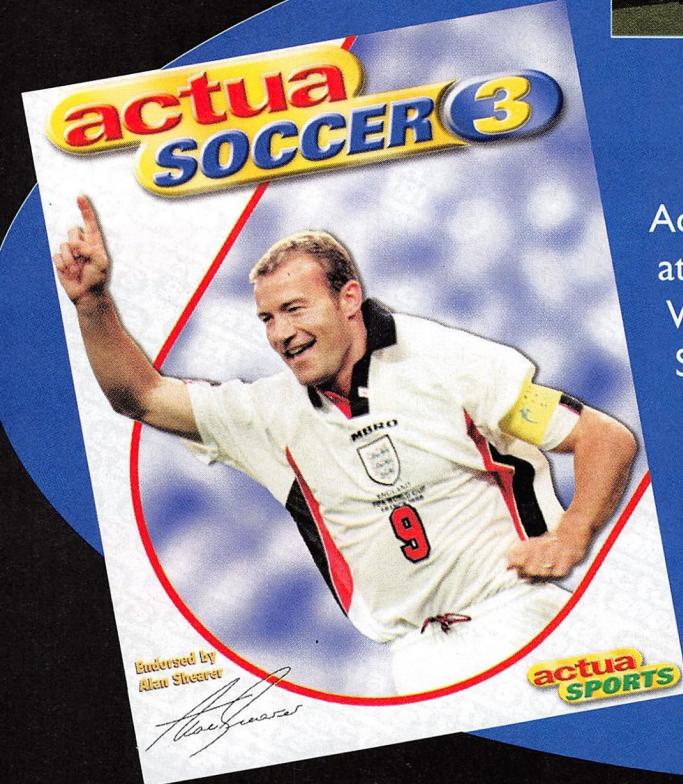
Available TBA

For Fresh looking title with a pedigree attachment to a fine novel by Philip Jose Farmer. Good ideas for a new approach to real time strategy, though poorly executed.

Against Clumsy and inefficient interface with no keyboard hotkeys makes you constantly fight the software instead of your opponent. No multiplayer option of any kind and no difficulty settings to adjust the gameplay.

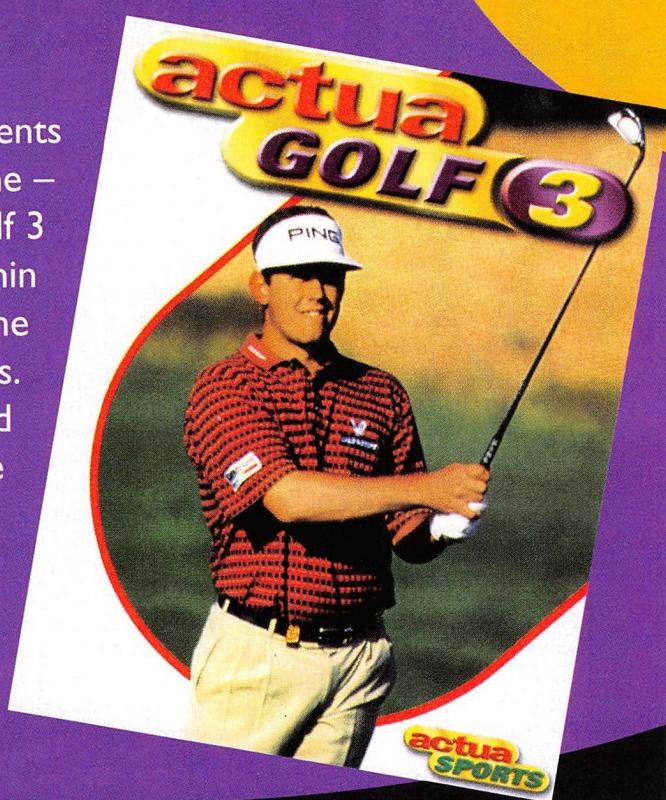
Need P133, 16MB RAM, Win95, 2xCD

Want P166, 3Dfx, 32MB RAM



Actua Soccer 3 recreates all the “in yer face” atmosphere of a real football match in the World-class stadium and represents the best Soccer title for your PC. The game combines simulation-style accuracy and realism with a fundamental ease of use and clarity of visuals only associated with high end arcade machines. Along with new and improved control methods, Actua Soccer 3 is the fastest and most authentic arcade-style game to date.

Combining the three ingredients necessary for a round of golf at home – style, accuracy and realism, Actua Golf 3 features fully motion captured players within a realistic golfing environment taken from the world's most dynamic and demanding courses. Features also include quality commentary and in-game sound effects. The new in-game control system, Actua Swing, ensures that Actua Golf 3 provides the player with the most authentic game to date.

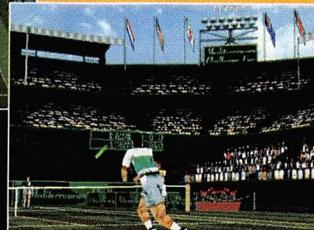


Three more sports simulation games for your PC as only

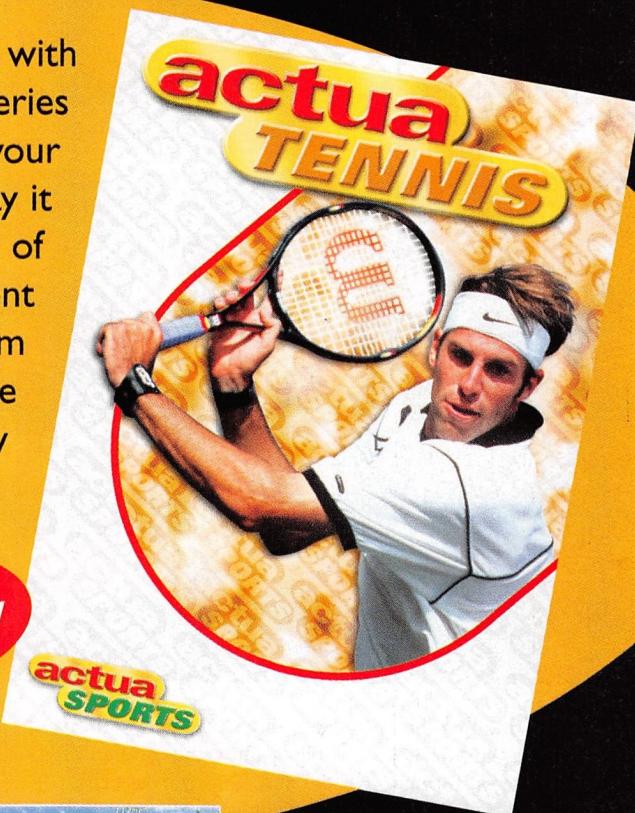
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SPORTS**

can deliver

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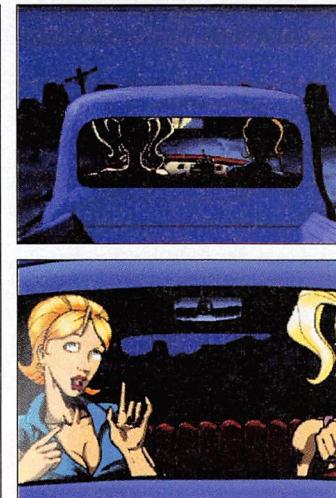
**actua
SPORTS**

G
Gremlin
INTERACTIVE

SPACE BUNNIES MUST DIE

Dang it, your sister Jocelyn has been snatched by no-good mutant alien bunnies. Well, nothing for it but to slay the whole race. We warned 'em!

The wiry Jemma and her curvaceous sister Jocelyn are on their way home from running the late shift at their country cookin' Diner. Jocelyn is an up-and-coming singer at both kinds of music, while Jemma is a no-nonsense Rodeo rider. They're both young, trim and gorgeous in a farm gal kind of way, dreaming of the day when their greater ambitions take them out of this two-bit hick town. When suddenly their ancient Dodge Ute kicks like a wounded hog, and they dangerously skid to a stop. Upon inves-



It's the hairdo, lady. The aliens think you're Baby Spice



rodeo gal speeds into the wilderness, out to kick some Rabbit Butt!

Them Space Bunnies Must Die!!

Taking place in an outdoors 3D environment, Space Bunnies Must Die is an interesting mix

of action and puzzle solving in a retro sci-fi flavour. You take the part of Jemma in her genocidal quest to rescue Mayleen. The action takes place in a Tomb-Raiderish 3rd person perspective behind the lean, Bunny-busting fifties girl, Jemma.

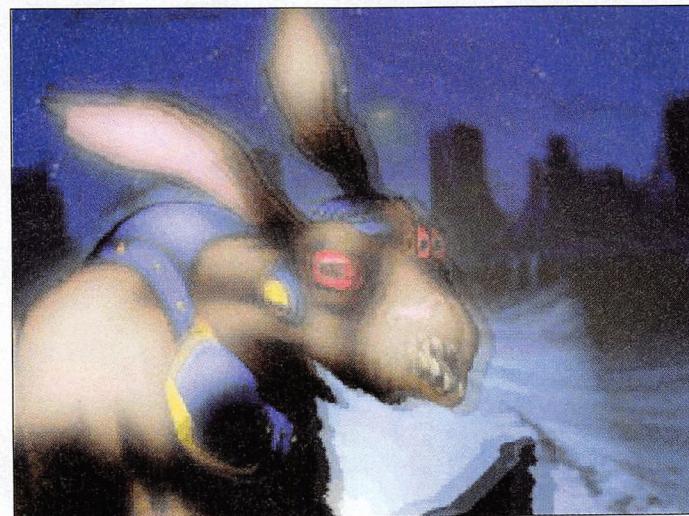
Inserting the magic carrot

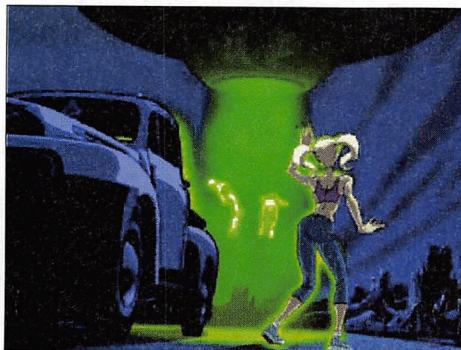
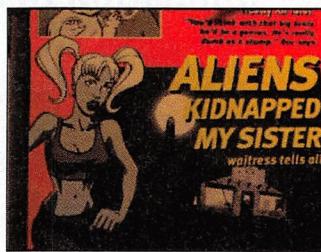
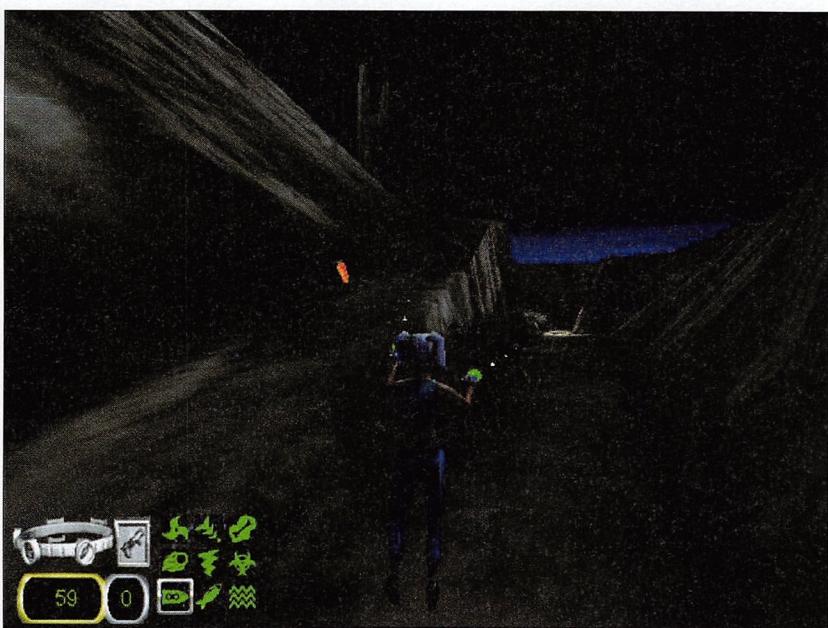
You must explore the treacherous depths of Bunny Butte, waste the rabbits and figure out the functions of some arcane bunny technology. Discovering what the obtuse equipment does is quite an adventure. Some devices are simply traps that impale you when tampered with, and others are more complex. Some are a related network of switches and activations, some are inactive, though their appearance gives you no indication of their function in most cases. There are lifts and teleporters with their own special activa-

tigating, the girls find that the Dodge has made a giant nasty mess out of the biggest Bunny they've ever seen! It's oozing a thick green juice out of the body-long tyre track that runs from its cotton tail up across its big goofy head. Strangely, its wearing a Star-Trek-ish weapon belt and assorted techy gizmos. As its one live eye flutters to a close, the girls are surrounded in an eerie green light!

Jocelyn and the roadkilled rabbit are suddenly sucked off the roadside and into a hovering UFO by a monstrous tractor beam. Jocelyn spots the craft with a keen eye as it vaults rapidly away, through the dark skies above the desert and descends near the formation the locals call Bunny Butte.

Standing in the dark, Jemma spies a glittering remnant. It's the dead Bunny's bat-belt! Clipping it on, the vengeful





tions, and a large robotic bunny I discovered. It was dead inactive until I tried the use button on it while holding a carrot. A specific animation followed of Jemma placing the carrot into a feed chute located underneath its torso. It instantly came to life, and killed our girly heroine in moments. Hmmm. Won't do that again! The whole process of Jemma gradually becoming familiar with the strange devices is very well done, and is quite a task of careful observation and prediction.

The combat side of things is very Tomb Raider-ish, in fact scarily so. Aiming is completely automatic, so all you really need to do is hold the fire button down, and dance about in a kind of jig that makes you hard-to-hit. There seems to be quite a large array of gear with which to make Bunny chop-suey, although in the earlier levels your attainment of it is slow.

Dodgy combat

Most of the navigation and acrobatics controls are straight out of Tomb Raider, which unfortunately means they are imprecise, clunky and difficult to manipulate, although there are a few new tricks Jemma has that are worth discovering. She does

some nifty sideways rolls, which kind of compensate for a comprehensive strafe function. But it's not really trying to be an action game. It looks damn interesting in most situations, regardless of what you're up to, and the environment interaction is way up there on the science grad scale.

There are a range of bunny flavours you encounter, including suicidal bunny-sappers that run straight towards you with a neutron bomb. The easy combat

and tricky puzzles in some ways remind us (well, those of us who remember) of MDK, which had a similar feel. We played an advance copy, but the theory and design was quite a solid premise for a long, enjoyable game. Perhaps not for action freaks, but

those with an enquiring mind and love of cerebral challenge and discovery.

Ed Dawson

A Space Bunny in its natural environment

74 %

Category 3rd-person shooter

Players 1

Publisher Running with Scissors

Price \$TBA

Rating M15

Available Now

For Superb characterisation and artwork, nicely logical problem-solving sections and object functionality. Wonderfully cartoonish cut-scenes.

Against Simple gameplay, auto-aiming, un-Croft-ish modelling on our heroine, who we have to constantly look at. Some consideration please!

Need P133, 16Mb RAM, Win 95

Want P200, 2nd-gen 3D card

3D SUPPORT

Across the board D3D



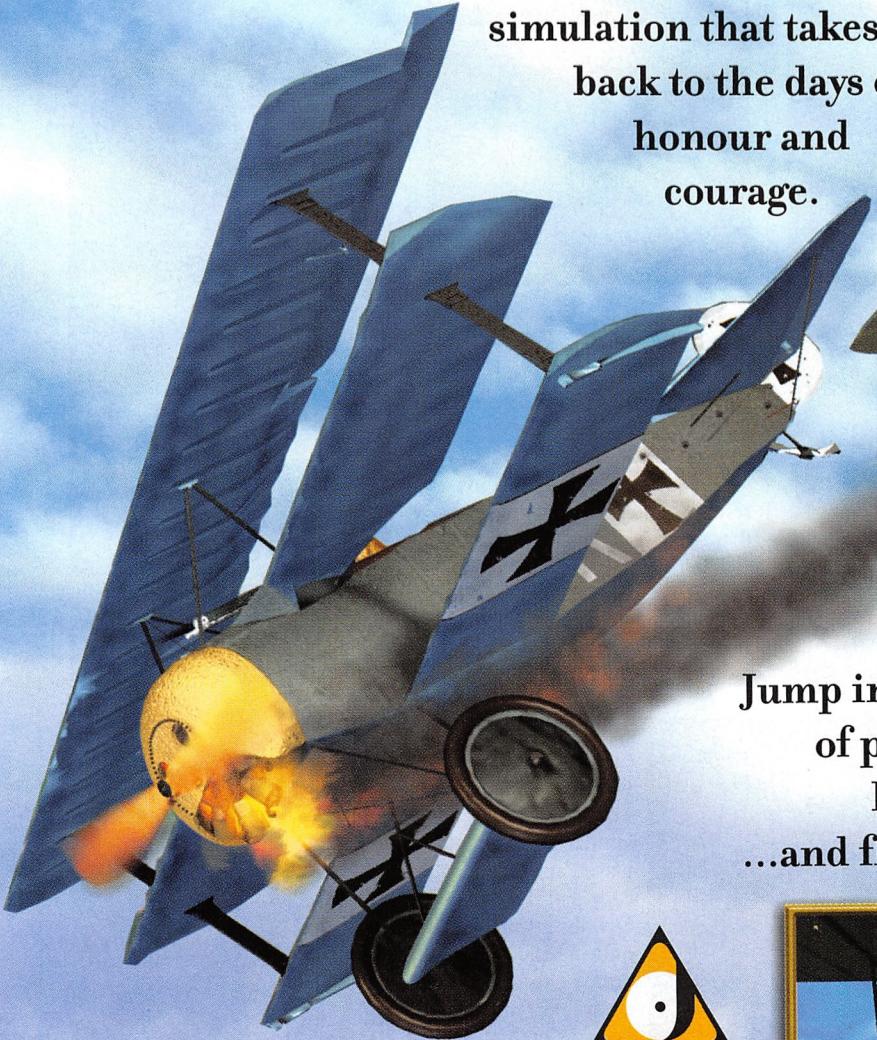
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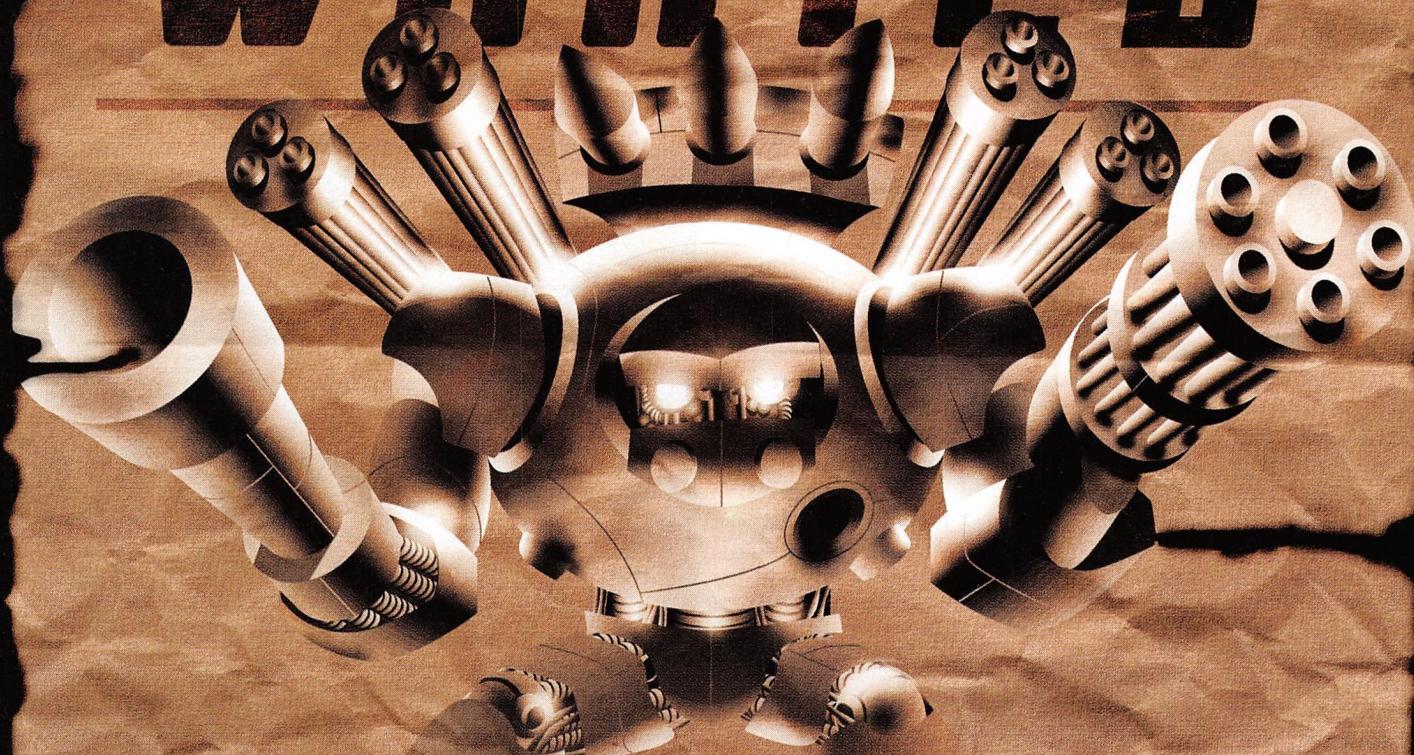


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This title is yet to be classified info@directsoft.com.au

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CAESAR III

Come! See! Conquer! Sierra gets it right the third time, and how!

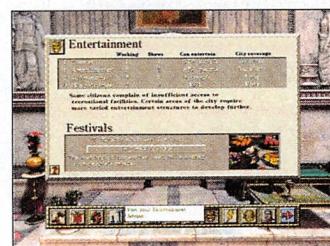
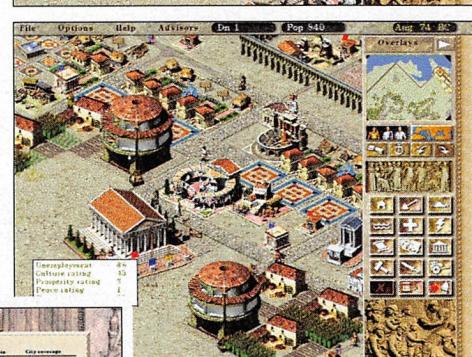
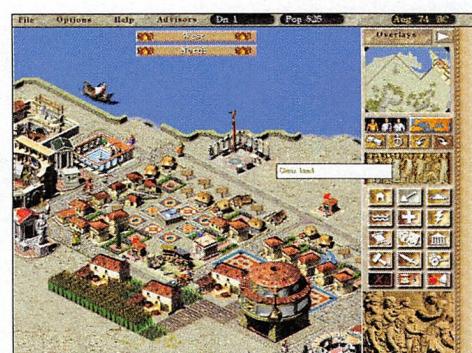
There I was sitting, nay, reclining in my palatial Governor's villa, eating exquisite grapes from the bosom of semi-naked girls while well-oiled eunuchs gently waved feathered fans all around. My chief advisor looked somewhat distracted as he detailed the unfortunate political and economic circumstances of the city. High unemployment, chronic food shortages, disease-ridden districts, run-down hospitals, deserted theatres and the presence in the streets of men with flaming torches and desperate eyes. Of course, I wasn't at all concerned. I knew I had the solution, the cure for all the ills of society. And it was so simple, too - Caesar would be very impressed with me. Three letters were all I would have to utter to my financial advisor and boundless utopia would surely be but a blink of an eye away. Oh, yes.

Sadly, however, this was Ancient Rome and they'd never heard of a GST. Cough, splutter! Rioters subsequently burnt down my luxurious villa

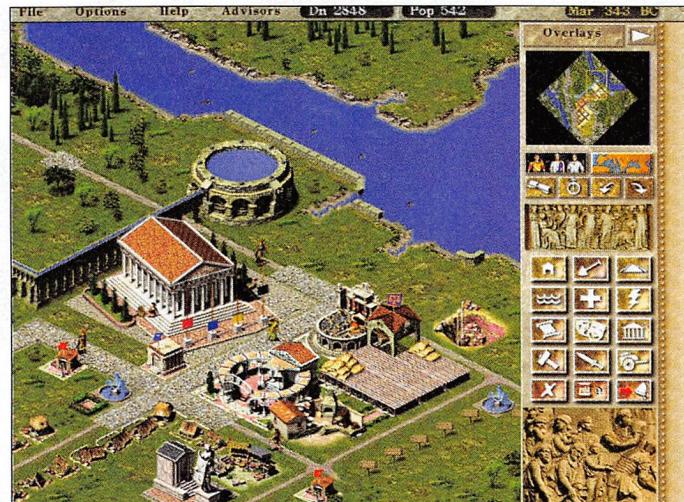
before Caesar sent in his own troops to run me out of town. Time to emigrate to France, methinks!

Procurator, dammit!

Having chosen a career in government, I had slowly worked my way up through the ranks so that subordinates had begun referring to me as Procurator. Besides this career option, Caesar III also invites you to test your town-planning skills at several stand-alone cities. In the former you will be given a specific goal and time-frame to achieve it, while the latter cities can be



played endlessly. Regardless of which option you choose, you will have to design your city from scratch. Initially, your concerns are with the basics of community life. Designated areas are set aside for housing the imminent stream of brave immigrants keen to settle in your town. They're keen, of course, because you've had the foresight to set up some essentials, like a farm or two (wheat



Like all great games, C3 is extremely easy to get in to but very, very hard to master

as a staple, some fruit for variety perhaps), a granary, marketplace, prefecture (for law and order), gardens (for decoration), and plenty of roads.

Once people begin making their home, it gets more complicated and a little bit Settlers-ish. Roads are crucial, for not only must people be able to get to work, but your most important workers spend all day long trudging up and down them. Delivering goods around town, whether food, raw materials or finished products, can only be done by workers like cart pullers and market traders. Therefore it's vital to provide roads that can be negotiated quickly and efficiently. Cart pullers need to get from farms and mines to gra-



naries, workshops and warehouses, while market traders have to pick up supplies from your stores and distribute them amongst your people. If you've built a market in a secluded area, for instance, then it won't receive enough goods and neither will the surrounding houses. Exhaustive planning ahead is necessary if you don't wish to be constantly renovating huge slabs of your city. And that's one thing guaranteed to get those rioters into the streets. They may well get lost in the labyrinthine mess



(left) The Hippodrome; give the people some bloodthirsty and vicious sports to watch and they'll stay happy



(above) My people rioting! What the hell!!? I thought they wanted a GST!

you've created, but they'll be there all the same.

Disgruntled natives

Yes, keeping everyone happy is a tough job. Before long your insatiable plebs will be demanding temples, theatres, schools, libraries, plazas, vineyards, furniture, pottery, bath houses, hospitals, even barbers and coliseums, the cheeky sods. The gigantic hippodrome, where they hold chariot races, simply has to be seen to be believed. Get one of these and you'll be governor for life. Or until you raise taxes or lower wages, that is.

Military threats from either disgruntled natives or enemies of Caesar require you to amass some sort of army. City walls, towers

and forts can be erected for defence, while a barracks and an academy will be needed to train troops. Battles take place on the city map, unlike in previous Caesar titles, and it all works pretty well. Also worthy of note is that in the career game, you'll frequently be faced with the choice of whether to pursue the more dangerous military positions or accept the jobs that leave you to concentrate upon running the city. It's nice to have a genuine choice between pacifist and warmongering roles. It's also nice to finally play a real-time strategy game that is exactly that - real-time strategy - rather than the usual C&C clones that are (mostly tedious) pseudo-action games more than anything else.

Audacious trading

Rather cunningly, Caesar III tempts you in its early stages into thinking that you're playing a fairly simple game. I was regularly making a terrific start, inspiring my nascent population with a clean and efficient town layout, opening up numerous

PLUS+



audacious trading routes, and taxing them in the nicest possible manner. Once I had to think about expansion, though, everything inevitably went horribly wrong. Infrastructure would collapse, urban sprawl followed soon after, and the plebs began to really hate it when I increased taxes yet again. Yet each time I reached that point when I realised I'd stuffed up, the very first thought that occurred to me was to try again. This time, I kept saying to myself, I'll get it right! And that's why I think Caesar III is such a good game.

David Wildgoose

88 %

Category Strategy

Players 1

Publisher Sierra

Price \$TBA

Rating G

Available Now

For Deep and highly addictive strategy with a very strong single player campaign. The variety and immense subtlety of the economic and political models will keep you occupied for months. Looks and sounds gorgeous, too.

Against The lack of direct control over people can cause frustration. No multi-player options, but then I fail to see how it could work anyway.

Need P90, 16Mb RAM, 4xCD

Want P166, 32Mb RAM

TOTAL AIR WAR

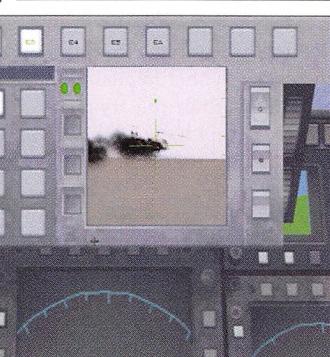
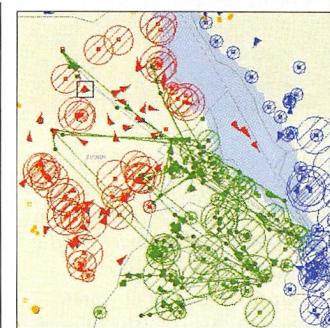
Combining three tactical levels of air war, this really is a Total title

I thought Total Air War (TAW) might just be a repackaging of F22ADF as I read the game briefs during its development. However, TAW is a mature product that combines the tactical (in seat F22), operational (AWACS) and the strategic (political) levels of war in a way not yet seen in a flight simulation.

Kill the COG

This is a game for serious simmers, and requires an understanding of terminology that will be new to many gamers; Centre of Gravity (COG). COG is that characteristic, capability or locality from which a nation, or military force, derives its freedom of action, strength, or will to fight. If you study the strategic level of war between two nations you will find many entities that, if neutralised, will reduce the ability of the nation to fight; and the most telling of these is the nation's COG. Some examples might be the act of terminating a leader, another is the serious disruption to the nation's infrastructure; as this effects the population's will to want the war (just ask Iraq).

At the Operational Level of War, the COG might be a nation's command, control, communications and computer (C4) links between the tactical level and the strategic level. Take these away and the tactical commanders don't know what is required of them from Defence HQ and Government, and the Government can't communicate with the armed forces! At the sharp end (the Tactical Level of War) a Fighter Wing's COG might be its ability to manoeuvre with the freedom of action to strike. Decimate the Wing and

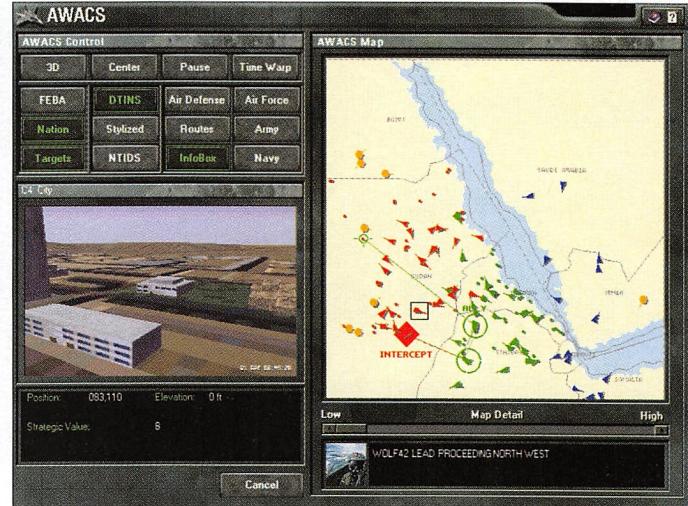


Though at first the level of detail might overwhelm, this is well worthy of long-term attention

you dislocate the enemy's COG; his battlefield value then degenerates markedly.

Background reading

TAW integrates these three levels of war, allows you to participate in each and affect the COGs on all three levels of war. The TAW manual gives some good advice, but PLUS will point you in the direction for some balanced reading because the TAW



manual purports that Air Power alone can dislodge an enemy's COG (which it can), but then goes on to say that it can also win the war. Not quite guys! I've never seen an aircraft secure ground, clear buildings or negotiate a treaty, and I never will!

On to the game then, and I will assume that most readers are familiar with F22ADF. The game has an excellent graphics engine and proficient gameplay requires a thorough knowledge of weapons systems, electromagnetic radiation levels, communications with AWACS and wingmen. It is definitely a very complex game, but the tenets are well explained in the 330 page manual.

Stuck in the Red Sea

TAW builds on F22ADF with a new Multiplay Option that allows



DOMINION: Storm over Gift 3

Ion Storm leaps into the fray with...with...this?



For a debut title, you would expect something a little classier, wouldn't you?



veteran of C&C, Red Alert, TA, Warcraft, Starcraft etc. Well, to be brutally blunt, not bloody much. In fact it's probably more appropriate to tell you what Dominion doesn't offer you.

On the back of the

packaging, Ion Storm (or Eidos) claim to be giving you "The most sophisticated AI in a real time strategy game" I don't know if it's possible to say this politely but this statement is nothing short of a bald faced lie. In fact I would go as far as to say that the AI in Storm Over Gift 3 is more primitive than the one used in the original C&C!

Aerobic Commanders

Try moving more than four or five vehicles together across long distances and you'll see what I mean. They tend to get lost very quickly, taking separate paths around obsta-

cles and terrain features as if they were deliberately programmed to annoy the crap out of you. One of the only interesting features of Dominion has in fact been pinched from Total Annihilation. The Commander in Dominion isn't critical to your success in the same way he is in TA, you don't get a (possible) "Game Over" situation if he dies, but he is capable of improving units' AI by being grouped with them. Worryingly though, he also doubles as an Aerobics instructor, leading the men in star jumps between missions to heal their wounds. Sheesh, at least Cavedog knew we gamers wouldn't put up with any Village People Commanders in Lycra shorts squeeling "come on everyone, crunch those buns! an ah lift an ah lift.....".

Proudly mediocre

And if you're thinking "Oh well, it might be dodgy but at least it'll run on my crusty old PC" then bite your brain because Dominion, with its powerhouse 2D graphics engine, needs at least a P166 and 32MB RAM to run! Talk about sloppy programming - Dune 2000 runs fine at the same resolution

and colour depth on a P90!

With Daikatana still over the horizon, Ion Storm have chosen a strange way to announce themselves to the world, "Hey everybody, we're loud, proud and mediocre!" That might sound harsh but really, to enter the fray by pushing a derivative and inferior product into the most competitive game genre in existence just isn't too bright in my book.

George Soropos

PLUS+



<http://www.eidos.co.uk/dominion/index.html>

55 %

Category C&C Clone

Players 1-Multi

Publisher Eidos

Price \$TBA

Rating MA

Available Now

For Quick and easy to learn with a couple of interesting unit types.

Against The AI is quite appalling at times and the unit graphics are so small that combat can get pretty confusing. Relatively high spec machine needed for such a simple game and it offers nothing new.

Need P166, 32MB RAM, 4xCD

Want P200, 64MB RAM, 12xCD



Well what can I say? The guys at Ion Storm must feel pretty embarrassed about this after all the hoopla surrounding the launch of their new company and direction. They probably should have released this as a free teaser to attract some customer loyalty rather than starting out on the wrong foot with a lame-as-hell C&C clone.

Intricate storyline!

The paper thin background story to this title goes something like "Mysterious beacon sends message from planet indicating artifact of vast power. Four races go to planet to find artifact, four races get shirty and poke each other with sharp objects, war starts, you must win". That's pretty much it. But now that you're sitting on the edge of your seat/toilet/servant you'll want to know just what Dominion has to offer you, the Real Time Strategy nut and

REDJACK

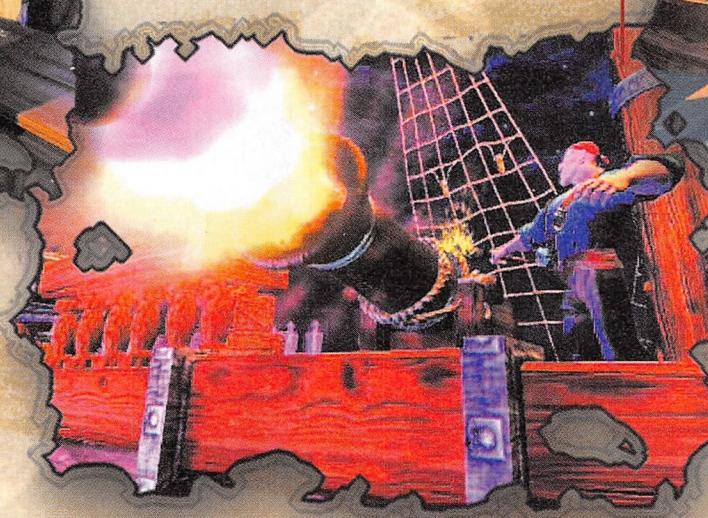
A Swashbuckling Adventure of Betrayal & Revenge

REVENGE OF THE BRETHREN



Prepare to be boarded.

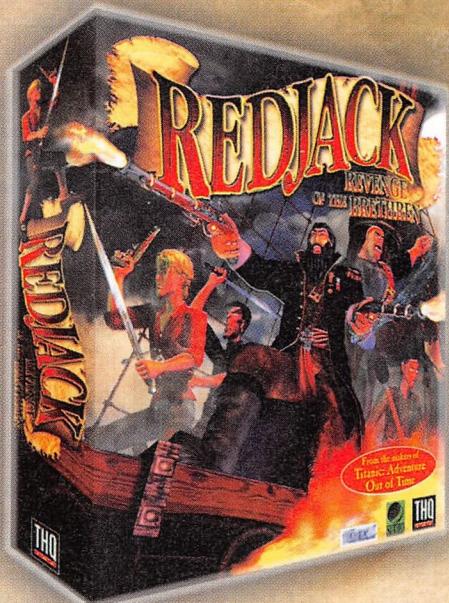
Journey to a world filled with nasty characters, great treasures, and you.



Your alter ego, Nick—about to be shark bait.

features:

- More than 40 puzzles, fights and adventures. Non-stop action to test marksmanship, reflexes and "mystery solving skills" – one wrong move and your dead!
- Unrestricted panning and seamless match-edits to travel sequences - from the picturesque English villages to the lawless West Indies.
- More than 20 animated, 3D characters all in spectacular 32-bit colour - the likes of which have not been seen on any platform.
- A haunting soundtrack with CD quality sound in 3D stereo, to envelop your every twist and turn.



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DEATHKARZ

The evolution of futuristic arcade racing games continues

Recently, there has arisen a new genre of racing games, of a futuristic feel and arcade handling. It all started with Wipeout, closely followed by POD and more recently Ultimate Race Pro and Motorhead. These games explore the gap between simulation racing and arcade games based around a realistic premise. The basic idea is to travel at bloody insane speeds through a splashy future world, blow up some stuff, and listen to some hardcore beats. A techno soundtrack is requisite, as is portrayal of a bleak, polluted landscape, drenched with super-corporate advertising.

Eye candy ahoy!

DeathKarz is the latest offering in this vein. Taking plenty of inspiration from previous games of a similar nature, we're pretty damn impressed with the results! Firstly, the graphics are nothing short of gorgeous. These designers have no aversion to overuse of reflection, coloured lighting, swirly energy effects and superb high-res textures. This is a good thing! The game is one long dose of eye-candy from start to finish. Each environment has a strong theme, which is thoughtfully illustrated in the excellent landscapes. This is another that looks as good or better than the titles we used to pay \$2 to play down at the local seedy establishment. Ahhh 3Dfx, saviour of us all!

And it doesn't end there. The gameplay is a finely tuned beast as well. The familiar physics of racing has been

PLUS+



108 PC PowerPlay

carefully built into the basis of all movement, which makes DeathKarz extremely intuitive to get into.

And once playing, there is plenty of learning curve to climb as well. While I was playing DeathKarz, I got an amazing sensation of being totally in control at all times.

Car variety

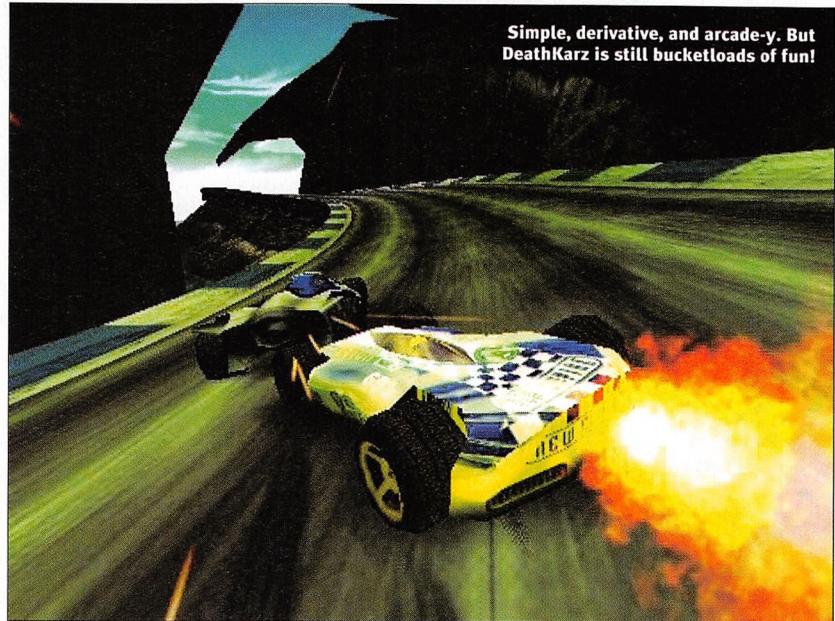
There are four models of car to choose from, each leaning carefully toward a distinct style of racing.

Ranging from the heavy and lumbering juggernauts, which powerslide around and mash things they run into through to the lightweight formula model with insane, almost uncontrollable acceleration. It's as simple as picking the style you prefer, and getting on the track! This is a well-considered design, which makes the game very accessible to a wide range of gamers and racing preferences.

The usual cockpit, bonnet, external, and chopper camera views are available, as well as a cool "flick" momentary perspective that checks your six position. The game modes are almost predictable without opening the box; Arcade, Championship and Time Trial (with ghost opponent) selections are straight out of the formula book for driving games, though this isn't necessarily a bad thing.

Nitromania

DeathKarz has some combat elements, although they are really quite subtle, and don't make a massive impact on the game flow - the game plays equally well with all weapons and powerups disabled. Each car comes with a piss weak laser thing that can destroy an opponent after only sixty five direct hits, for example. The really meaty stuff is picked up from spinning diamonds that hold a random weapon/powerup, exactly



Simple, derivative, and arcade-y. But DeathKarz is still bucketloads of fun!



85%

Category Arcade Racing

Players 1-8 TCP/IP, IPX, serial, modem

Publisher Melbourne House

Price \$89.95

Rating G

Available Now

For Gorgeous graphics and solid game-play make this a very satisfying race game.

Against Fairly derivative game concept, although it is probably the best variation on the theme we've seen.

Need P166, 16MB RAM, Windows 9x, DirectX 6.0, Direct 3D accelerator card with 4MB RAM, 6xCD

Want P200, 32MB RAM, Force-Feedback joystick

3D SUPPORT
Direct 3D, 3Dfx

Ed Dawson

REDJACK

Any game that gives you an excuse to say Ooh aargh! has to be good

Ooh aargh! I love an excuse to write ooh aargh, and what better excuse can I have than a pirate game! Ooh aargh! Ah well, enough ooh aargh-ing. The story of Redjack is of a young layabout (your character) who lives on a remote island, dreaming of a more exciting and adventurous life. And what do you know, ooh aargh! that new life suddenly appears with a bang when hooded assassins start creeping about your idyllic home, chasing after your noggin! You see it's all about Redjack's treasure and the few remaining crewmen that were with him at the end, the heirs to this vast fortune. Ooh aargh!

Kicking pirate butt

Redjack was the greatest pirate of all you see, but he was betrayed during a raid on a Spanish gold depository and mortally wounded in the escape. Now the traitor has started killing off Redjack's crew to take the treasure for himself and it's your job to find out who he is, and kick his butt!

Redjack uses something similar to Cryo's Omni3D engine to deal with the terrain graphics, and therefore looks quite lovely as well as being fast. The engine allows you to scroll and zoom around the CD based art as if it were rendered and also allows you to interact with certain elements of your environment.

PLUS+

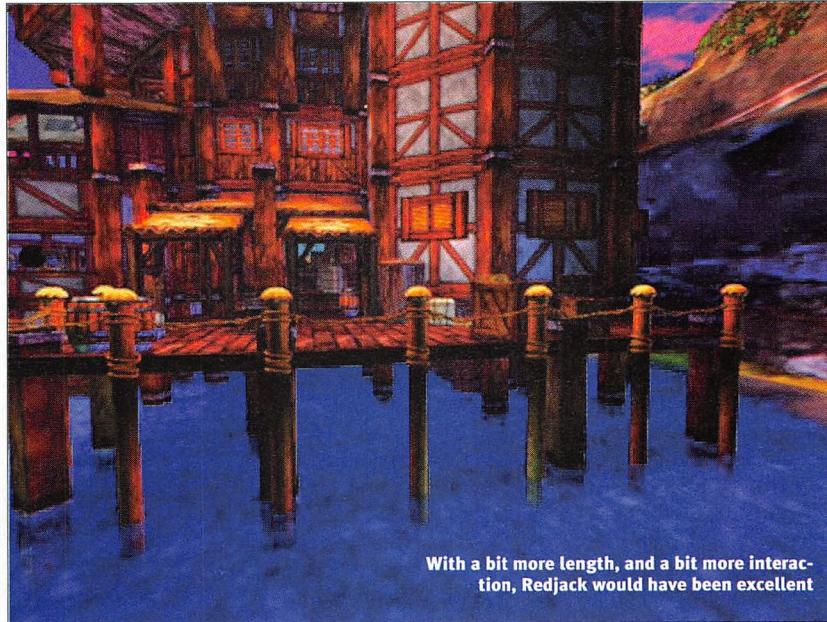


<http://www.cyberflux.com/rejack/home.html>

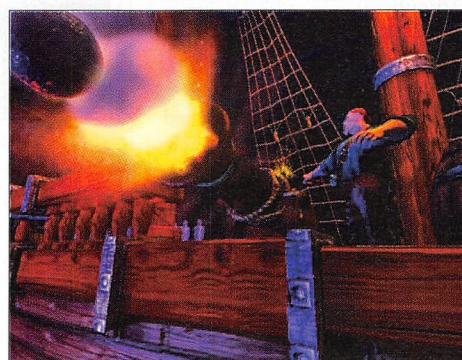
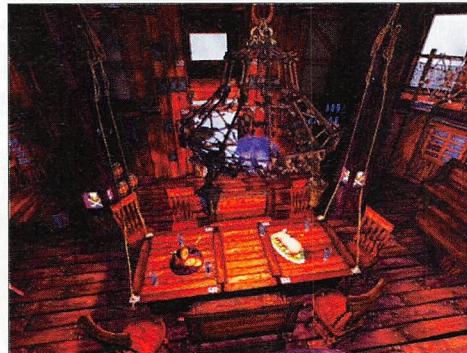
For example, you can pick up and manipulate objects that you find as well as zoom in on areas to gather more info about them. Nothing out of the ordinary here, but the interface is perfectly functional.

Point, click, and thrust

The most interesting aspect of Redjack's engine, though, is the combat. When you are faced with a biffo situation, a quick loading sequence is initi-



With a bit more length, and a bit more interaction, Redjack would have been excellent



ated as the game prepares itself and then it's on for young and old. The combat method is reminiscent of old RPG titles with a mouse click to swing your sword at one of three strike zones to parry or thrust, depending on your timing. It sounds pretty dinky but it's actually fun and involves enough skill and dexterity to make it interesting.

As you'd expect with an adventure game, there are puzzles to be solved as well and, for those of you that smashed your Myst and Riven CD's against the wall in frustration, thankfully they aren't of the hair pulling variety but are quite well thought out. When you get really stuck, some of the other characters in

the game will also help you out with a good hint or suggestion which is a nice touch.

Something different

While hardly breaking new ground in the genre, Redjack does touch on a rarely visited subject,

which kind of adds a bit of originality, and does it with some style. Heck I don't know, I just kept wanting to play the damn thing! If you like adventure and pirates you could do a lot worse than this. An experienced adventurer may find it a bit too short though, even on three CD's it doesn't take much time to get to the end.

George Soropos

70%

Category Adventure

Players 1

Publisher Cyberflux

Price \$TBA

Rating MA

Available Now

For Good story, characters and graphics immerse you in the game world happily for hours.

Against A bit too short for the experienced gamer, combat system's a bit stodgy also.

Need P133, 32 MB RAM, 4xCD

Want P200, 12xCD

THE FIFTH ELEMENT

Despite the Playstation heritage, finally there's a game that does justice to the movie

The Fifth Element was a great story and one that the game's designers obviously didn't want to waste so they built the game right around it. For those not familiar with this excellent film's storyline here's a quick synopsis: Big ball of evil appears near Earth threatening to swallow it whole, Bruce Willis bleeds a lot, four elements plus fifth secret element are needed to stop evil, fifth element turns out to be former east European fashion model Mila Jovovich, villain with bad hair tries to steal elements, Bruce Willis winces then bleeds a lot, elements recovered, Earth is saved, woohoo!

Each game level progresses through the events in the film, though not slavishly. Obviously extra elements had to be added to make a game out of this thing. The game environment, for example, has a number of puzzles in the form of finding switches to unlock doors and set off explosions as well as dexterity tests like air vents that have to be carefully jumped.

Console controls

A word of warning about the control method though. The Fifth Element can only be controlled by a joypad or keyboard...no mouse. You see, it is also a console game, a Playstation game to be precise, and this ancestry is probably the single worst thing about the game. The control method will be familiar to Tomb Raider fans but The Fifth Element is a much more combat/action oriented title and the lack of

PLUS+



mouse control makes aiming your weapons a frustrating task at times. And of course this in turn makes the game itself a bit frustrating as well.

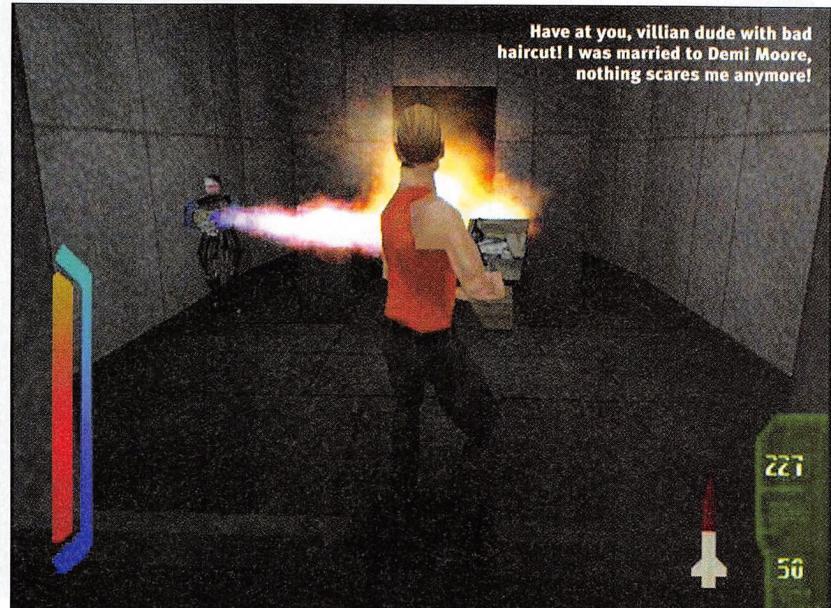
A few weapons

Speaking of weapons, veterans of PC first person action games such as Quake and Unreal will be a little disappointed by the lack and variety of those available in The Fifth Element. You begin the game with a pathetic little automatic pistol, eventually find a machine gun, then Zorg's mega weapon containing a rocket launcher, machine gun, freeze ray and flame thrower and finally an energy weapon of some sort (not seen in the film) that can target multiple enemies at once. The lack of a crosshair and fine control over your aim makes it hard to use the guns and also makes the early stages of the game quite difficult.

Filmic elements

As you can imagine, the game incorporates some wicked clips from the film. In fact each of the missions is designed around a particularly important event in the film and when you've done the deed successfully (and sometimes during the course of the mission as well) you're rewarded with a snippet of footage, and there are quite a few of them too.

In comparative terms The Fifth Element doesn't stack up very well against true first person shooters like Unreal, and ultimately you could say that this is really a console game. The change of platform didn't



80%

Category Action

Players 1

Publisher Ubisoft

Price \$TBA

Rating MA

Available Now

For Follows the film's plot very closely so fans will get a kick out of it. Excellent footage from the film adds to the atmosphere.

Against Better as a console game as it suffers in comparison to first person action titles on the PC. Too few weapons and enemies and a non-existent targeting system.

Need P133, 16 MB RAM, Windows 9x

Want P233, 32 MB RAM, Direct3D accelerator or 3Dfx

3D SUPPORT

Any Direct3D card

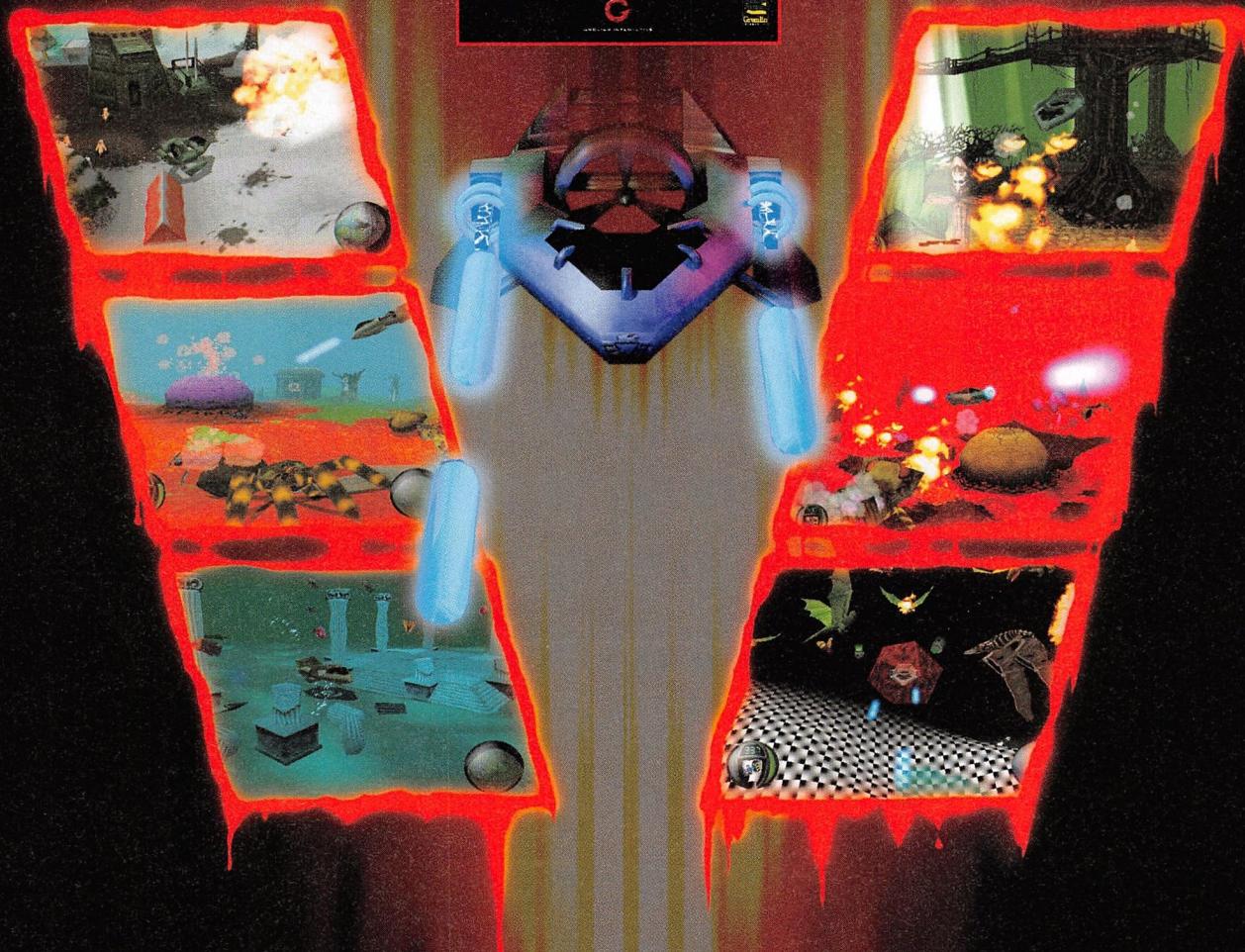
George Soropos

THE FOLLOW UP TO THE CLASSIC '80'S HIT 'VIRUS'

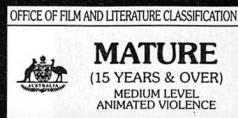
V2000 plunges you into a series of surreal worlds where virus spitting giant spiders and exploding nuclear reactors are part of everyday life... Rescue people and set them to work.



Take over the alien possessed creatures and turn them against each other. Only by using your brains as well as your bombs will you stop the virus from destroying your worlds.

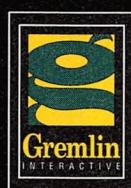


- Use brute force or strategic planning to combat over 50 different types of alien creatures •
- Rescue and train your people to make 24 new weapons and extra defences •
- Find the numerous trophies and secret exits that improve your rank and give access to hidden worlds •
- Master the flight controls against weather conditions like snow, wind and tidal waves •
- Marshal your robot forces against the invasion •
- Multiplayer: 8 player Deathmatch in 6 unique arenas •
- Explore and save 30 massive worlds •



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GROLIER INTERACTIVE



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NIGHTLONG: Union City Conspiracy

More than just a Blade Runner knockoff, Nightlong is a solid game in itself

Nightlong takes place one hundred years into the future, in a world not so very different from our own. Hovering cars have finally become reality, but in many ways society still resembles what we know today. Social decay and rampant Internet commercialism are equally rife, and elected democracy still showcases the fundamental cracks in human nature.

Vodka drinking bachelors

You take the part of Joshua Reeve, ex-military private detective and streetwise tough guy. Josh is a regular nineties bachelor. Smart, bald and kinda ugly, he's quite a realistic figure who is interestingly human. He's walked the thin line, but he's not a hero by any means and won't take stupid chances. He's a self-absorbed Vodka drinking bachelor - classic private eye material. He's also quite the charmer, although constantly referring to women as "broads" and hailing the benefits of single life.

You're on the case of terrorist attacks on a corporation that provides most of the election funding for Hugh Martens, city Mayor and Josh's trench buddy from back in the service. Josh owes him from an old favour, and it's your job to find out who is indirectly sabotaging Hugh's chances in the upcoming election.

Future living

Nightlong's graphics are on par with Blade Runner, beautifully composed in 3D rendered graphics. Quite a lot of nice

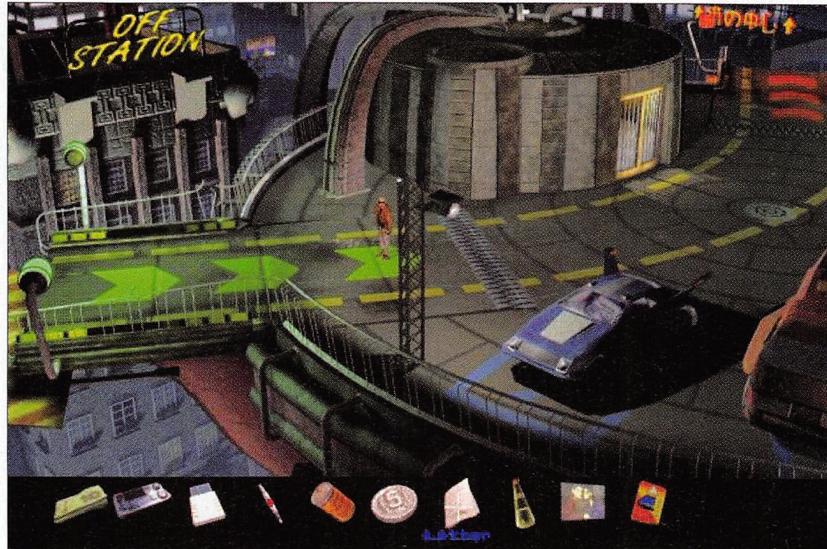
PLUS+



<http://www.team17.com/nightlong/uk/index.htm>

environmental animation gives it just enough ambience as well. The futuristic depiction of skyscraper-packed vertical skylines and cramped modular living quarters is utterly realistic in a future-telling kind of way.

Josh cruises through these grungy environments with a laid back, sauntering walk. He's in no hurry to do anything, which means you will sometimes



Apart from the odd annoyingly illogical puzzle, Nighlong is very playable

curse him for his "slacker" disposition! There is no way to make him run which is kind of annoying, especially when traveling back and forth through big environments.

Slick interface

Navigating with point & click actions, you can direct Josh's movement, or get him to describe something he sees in greater detail. This gives you clues about relevant topics, and important "world" information as well, since Josh is your only correspondent from the future world you are submerged in. Using items and equipments is absolutely simple, through an excellent system that simply displays your inventory across the base of the screen on demand, whereby you can use items with other items, or world objects and people.

The puzzles are fairly standard fare, although some of the logical associations are quite a stretch! Often you may have to randomly experiment with items to get a result. The in-game characters have quite a depth and substance to them. Well created and appropriate, each requires a different approach through conversation and item usage before they will provide the answers you need from them.

Waving mice

Otherwise, it's a fairly standard adventure game. Unfortunately the dreaded "screen wave" where you hunt for "hotspots" on screen to investigate is actually quite necessary to overcome quite a few obstacles in the game path. Veteran adventure gamers will find this quite the norm, however.

Overall, it's a very well assembled, easy to play adventure with a complex, strong story and excellent implementation of a future setting. No massive breakthroughs, but it's a solid game nonetheless.

Ed Dawson

79 %

Category Adventure

Players 1

Publisher Microprose

Price \$TBA

Rating TBA

Available Now

For Cool plotline, superb cyber-characters and believable future world. Funky slick interface also.

Against Some nitpicking, illogical puzzle obstacles to gameflow.

Need Pentium 100, 16MB RAM, Windows 9x, DirectX 5 compatible graphics & sound cards, 4xCD, 30 MB disk space

Want Pentium 133, 32 MB RAM

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- Full Direct 3D support for superior graphics performance

Windows 95/98

INSTORE NOW

WETRIX

Ed returns, and gets wet'n'wild with the latest N64 puzzler

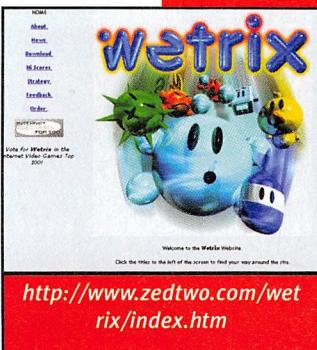
In Wetrix, your whole objective is to prevent water from spilling off your square playing area, which hangs in 3D space. Tetris-esque blocks fall from the sky, which you use to hastily construct dams and enclosed areas. You have your standard square, t-junction and straight bits, which you can rotate horizontally around their axis. As you add pieces they melt together, forming an amorphous mass that increases in height where they overlap. Randomly, you will be given water bubbles that release an amount of the slippery H₂O stuff into your little world. When you put these down, it splashes very realistically: pooling, trickling and running directly to the lowest point.

Visual flaws

This is the basic premise, managing your pieces to hold the water effectively. Unfortunately Wetrix falls down at this basic level. As the whole point is to save the water, it's a shame that it's very difficult to visualise properly. So much so that arrow indicators are required to show you where it is running away. Even when it should be dead obvious, it's very hard to tell visually that you made any mistake as there is no animation of the water spilling into space. You just have to rely on the indicators and "know" where it's going to happen. This kind of sucks and sours the game, but it is exactly the same on N64 so rest assured the console punks are going through the same frustrations!

Along with the blocks and water pieces, you must also contend with

PLUS+



"downer" pieces that melt a part of your precious landmass, bombs that create an instant plughole and flames which will destroy dry land or evaporate a water body, extending your lifespan considerably. There are a few other key factors to consider; the more separate pools of water you have the more points you score, and when you accumulate a certain massive amount of water on deck you get the highly lucrative rainbow multiplier. Then, of

course there's the earthquake limit; a weight value that limits the amount of "dirt" you can stack on the block. Exceeding the earthquake limit causes mass destruction of your carefully constructed hydro management system, and great woe.

Console conversion...

The only other thing we might mention is that there's no difference whatsoever with Wetrix's N64 parent - with no 3D hardware support either! We watched the game happily choke a P233MMX with 64 megs RAM, when the "recommended" system is a P166 with 32 Megs. Sorry, not good enough.

It's a little insulting to expect

us to lap this up, flaws and all, when there are only minor cosmetic enhancements to differentiate it over the N64 version. If you have one of those infernal things, it's probably worth getting the game in its original console state. It translates very badly to PC.

Ed Dawson

40%

Category Wacky Kiddies Puzzler

Players 1-2

Publisher Infogrames

Price \$TBA

Rating G

Available Now

For Original and cool game concept, nicely animated 3D water.

Against Poor conversion from the N64, with little or no gameplay improvements. Poor code speed and a crap interface really lets this one down.

Need P90, 16 Megs RAM, Win95, Direct-X 5, 2x CD-ROM.

Want P166, 32 Megs RAM

3D SUPPORT

For a fully 3D game, strangely we have zero 3D support! We're pissed at this. Really.



Anotehr Tetris derivative, another console port. Bah!



Knights and Merchants

THE SHATTERED KINGDOM

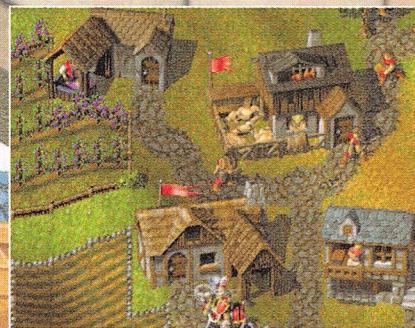
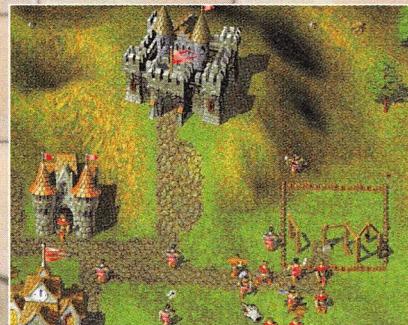
REAL-TIME STRATEGY IN MEDIEVAL TIMES



Elegantly recreates the arcane Middle Ages with extraordinary detail and lush graphics.

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- Incredibly detailed character graphics and lifelike sounds immerse the players in a medieval world.
- Lush, realistic landscapes based on the European countryside. Hills, valleys and plains make a natural, life-like world that features a variety of terrain sets and weather conditions.
- 20 single player missions.
- 10 Multiplayer maps with a variety of scenarios. Players can choose from skirmishes or village building.
- 25 different types of buildings, including horse stables, farms, schoolhouses and gold mines!
- 10 different troop types, including archers, scouts, knights, bowmen and barbarians.
- More than a dozen different types of characters.



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TIGER WOODS 99

We won't even wonder what EA paid Tiger for the rights to his name, instead, here's the game.

What Tiger Woods has done for golf over the last few years is outstanding. He's brought youth to a game usually dominated by gentlemen of the older persuasion. He's given us young men a hope that one day we all might follow each other around an evergreen course belting the crap out of a little white ball. Hooray for Tiger!

EA have probably gone to all length's possible with the graphic content of this game, it is the best looking golf game I have ever seen. On top of this, the Direct 3D gives you the fastest shot load times I have ever seen, no more waiting for your next shot. In competition mode you have the benefit of playing in real time and not pre-recorded contests like most previous golfing titles, you'll also have the choice of some of the world's second best golfers. They include players such as Tom Kite, Mark O'meara, Lee Jansen and Tom Sadler.

Swings like a gate

EA in their wisdom have done a little modifying with the swing meter, and I think that it was about time. If not just to change the game of golf on a PC platform. You still have a basic 3-button swing technique, but if you like getting

PLUS+

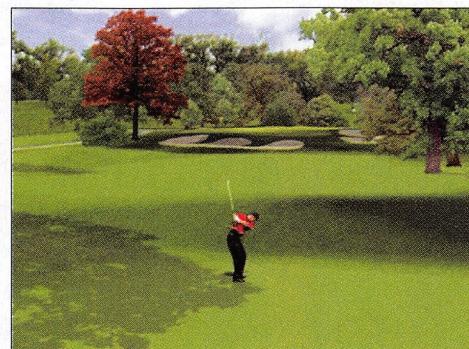
The screenshot shows a sidebar for the CBS Sportsline website. It includes a link to "Tiger Woods 99" and a "Sportsline Game 3 on Baseball LIVE". The sidebar also features a "Top News" section with headlines like "Tiger Woods' new book" and "Tiger Woods' new book". Below that is a "Spotlight" section with a picture of Tiger Woods.

<http://www.sportsline.com/>
The CBS Sportsline page.
One very tasty site for sporty types.

right into your golf, you can chose to use the mouse to mimic your club movements. This means if you want to slice the ball, you actually have to spin the mouse ball at the end of your forward motion of the mouse, then you get the desired effect (hopefully). This method has been used in other golf games such as Front Page Sports, but this one actually works quite well and you'll find yourself switching between the two methods just to see which will give you more accuracy. One other bonus upon opening Tiger Woods 99 is that you receive a lovely Tiger Woods Play Guide CD on top of the game CD.

Putting pain

While playing Tiger Woods '99 for the first time I actually felt like EA had bothered to add every minuscule detail to the game and this always makes you happy - especially with ambient noise effects and a massive club selection to choose from. Then you drive that little white sucker off the tee and if you're good you might make the green in one. Then you pull that skinny club that your meant to gently persuade the ball to go into with out, you line the putt up, let her rip and watch the ball go 3 feet left of the hole. This is where all golf games let me down. They try to give you these lovely course overlays that help show the contour of the green, then you putt and all hell breaks



loose; first the ball goes the opposite way to which I'd directed it, and it flies a good 10 feet past where the hole is. Like I said though, you will be lucky to find one that doesn't have this problem.

Unfortunately, unless the Direct 3D-support and the modifications to the swing meter get you all excited, there isn't much more that we haven't seen before.

Hear Tiger roar

Tiger Woods 99 offers a wide range of play modes and golfers to choose from but the ball dynamics leave a little to be desired, and I think this is where golf games really need the work. As far as Tiger Woods trivia goes, you'll get a fair amount of it before and while you play as there are Tiger Bio facts that dictate Tiger's playing career from the age of 3, when he first putt against Bob Hope as well as other useless bits of info on the one the only Tiger Woods. Go Tiger!

Roger Buckman

It's even got the trademark Tiger mannerisms and celebrations. Pity about the ball dynamics though...

79%

Category Sports

Players 1-4

Publisher EA Sports

Price \$49.95

Rating TBA

Available Now

For No loading wait after every shot, three courses and a Tiger Woods playguide inside the box. The Tiger mannerisms can be fun to watch.

Against Take away the 3Dfx support and it's just another golf game. Not the greatest ball dynamics for a golf game.

Need P133, 32MB ram, 4x CD, 100MB HD space, Win 95 or 98.

Want 200MHz, 64MB ram, 3DFX card 4MB (a must)

3D SUPPORT

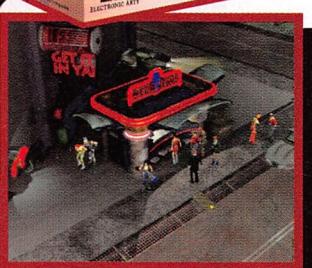
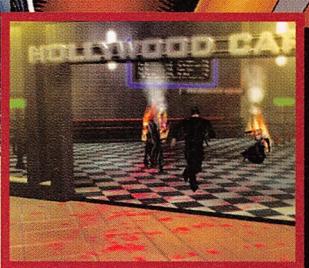
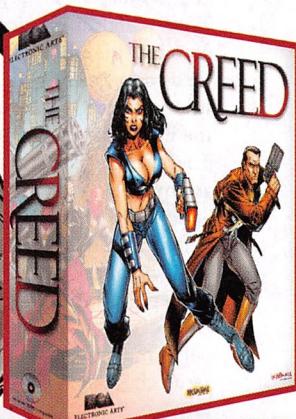
Direct3D

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S.C.A.R.S.

Great graphics doth not maketh a great driving game. They sure do make it pretty though...

OK, so someone walks up to you in the street and asks what you think will happen when we can build supercomputers that are far, far more intelligent than humans will ever be. It's an intriguing question that bears careful consideration and much philosophical thought. But no matter how much you think about it, or how weird you are, I strongly doubt that one of your answers would be "well, the 9 supercomputers would gain emotions analogous to ours, and then get bored and decide to create a virtual reality racetrack with cars modelled on animals from the wild and race them around just for the hell of it". Yes, yes indeed - this is the premise behind SCARS, or Super Computer Animal Racing Simulation.

Catch-up logic

Silly premises aside, and to be fair the premise behind arcade style racing games is not of huge importance, SCARS is a multi-platform release, on the PSX, N64 and the PC. And yes, this does mean that we're talking about a very arcade styled game. True to life car physics be damned, the important part as far as developers Vivid Image were concerned was fun, and for the most part they've succeeded. There is one aspect that really annoys me about SCARS though, and that's the 'catch-up' logic that's applied to the AI machines.

Vivid and Ubisoft have decided to phrase it thusly; "intelligent CPU cars that monitor player performance and adjust ... for a more challenging and enjoyable race", but what-

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It's pretty, it's simple, and...well... it's pretty simple

ever spin is put upon it, the end result is that you're crippled when you're racing against CPU opponents. What 'catch-up' logic means is that no matter how well you race, if you're in front and you hit every corner perfectly the CPU cars will still be right behind you. Now, it's debatable as to whether this makes for a more 'interesting' race because of the proximity of opponents and the pressure that brings, or whether it makes an otherwise enjoyable game quite annoying. I've lost count of the number of times that I lost a race because I was shunted off course by a CPU driver on the last bend after leading for the entire race - needless to say a very frustrating experience, especially seeing as you pretty much need to win every race to progress through to the next track.



opinion it all becomes a bit boring without them.

So what it all boils down to is that you've got a game that's eminently suited to console machines (albeit with much nicer graphics, of course), with one very annoying gameplay feature (the catch-up logic), some nice weapons and pickups, and a decent driving model for this style of game. It's certainly not genre breaking, and there's not quite the same addictive qualities of Mario Kart or the like, but it is enjoyable, at least for a little while.

Gareth Jones

64%

Category Arcade racing

Players 1-2

Publisher Ubisoft

Price \$TBA

Rating G

Available Now

For Very pretty graphics, decent array of cars and weapons, and some fairly nicely laid out tracks.

Against Catch up logic applies whether you want it to or not, and you have to win each of the four 'cups' as well as the special challenge modes before cars and other tracks become available to you.

Need P133, 16MB RAM, 4xCD, 4MB Direct 3D Video Card

Want P166, 32MB RAM, 8xCD

3D SUPPORT

Direct3D compatible card required

*Turn your PC into an
arcade machine*



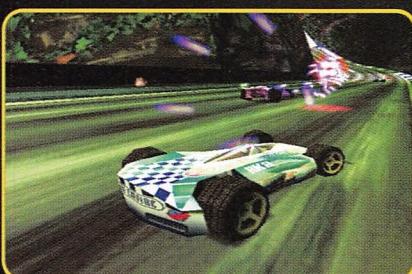
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of Unreal..."

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NHL 99

Great graphics: "It's in the game!" Slick design: "It's in the game!", great gameplay: "We're still looking!".

They're the best in the business at what they do, but EA Sports haven't quite reached the heights of excellence that they're capable of with NHL '99. It's a bit sad, really, because the game is easily the best looking sports sim I've ever laid eyes on, the motion capture is the most fluid and detailed, the detail in the stadium is astounding, and the logos, the uniforms, the players and the teams are all accurately modelled upon their real life counterparts. But the actual game, the most important bit, the bit that matters most, this is the part that has been somewhat neglected in comparison to the graphics.

A year slower

NHL 99 is a fast paced game (though it's slower than NHL 98) in the sense that the players move around the rink with alacrity, but the control method leaves a little to be desired. As is necessary with a game of this nature, you can only control one player at a time though you do need to swap between which player you control rapidly - and here's the disappointing bit. The 'swap control to nearest player' key is far too sluggish for a game that moves this fast, and often you will find yourself left behind as the opposition move upfield. However, it's not all bad, as passing and shooting is performed quickly and smoothly as are the 'body check' and 'hooking' actions.

For the control method, EA have taken a fairly simplistic approach, with only four buttons used for in-game manoeuvres, rather than go for a complicated series of combinations and controls as with some of their other sports titles. It works well, with the same four keys handling defence, attack, goaltending and fighting. Yes - fighting. It wouldn't be Ice Hockey without the odd scuffle or two, would it, and we're not just talking about an animated cut scene either. You actually control the throwing of jabs, haymakers, taunts, clinch-



es, and jersey pulling. Sounds cool, doesn't it? Well, I really didn't get much out of it after the first time. It was cool to watch and participate in, but really, fighting serves no purpose other than to ensure that some players end up in the penalty box.

Sillynet

If you're a hockey fan then you should be well satisfied with the array of play modes available to you - once you get the hang of the trademark EA counter-intuitive interface, that is. You can play single games, tournaments, practice, finals series, multiplayer games, draft sessions, and plenty more options in between. And there's even TCP/IP play...sort of. You'll have to enter a cheat code to enable internet play, which seems ludicrous, but it's EA's way of allowing TCP/IP support for those that *really really* want it without having to deal with support calls. Yes, in this day and age *this* is the policy of EA regarding internet play. Fills you with joy, doesn't it?

Once you do become familiar with the idiosyncrasies of the game and controls NHL 99 is an enjoyable game. The feeling of body checking an opponent off the puck then moving quickly up the ice and finishing off with a layoff and a fast first time slap shot is well conveyed, and there's a decent array of strategic coaching decisions to be taken as well.



(top) A goalie gets a consoling hug
(above) The Ref gives in to his homo-erotic impulses

Puck this!

Overall though, even though it is a terribly cliched thing to say, I'd really only recommend this to hockey fans. Graphically you're in for a real treat, EA have really outdone themselves this time. But the gameplay flaws and the always annoying interface will test your patience unless you're filled with love for the real game. Still, a decent sim and quite a bit of fun to play, even if it could and should have been better.

Gareth Jones

PLUS+

NHL ONLINE

www.nhl-online.com

Not the official site, but a sizeable fansite with info on all the NHL games out there, including NHL 99



73	%
Category	Hockey Sim
Players	1-8 (IPX, TCP/IP [sort of], Modem)
Publisher	EA Sports
Price	\$79.95
Rating	G8+
Available	Now

For It looks slick, with fantastic motion capture and very detailed players, and ancillary things like breaking glass, fights, and so on. There's plenty of modes of play to choose from, even including internet play (sort of).

Against Sluggish control method makes defense a chore. Higher difficulty levels 'dumb down' your players rather than increase the AI of the opposition. The interface, as always, is schmick and pretty but annoying to use.

Need P166, Win 95/98, 16MB RAM, 2MB Video card, 4x CD

Want P233, 64MB RAM, Voodoo2, 200MB HD space free

3D SUPPORT
Direct3D

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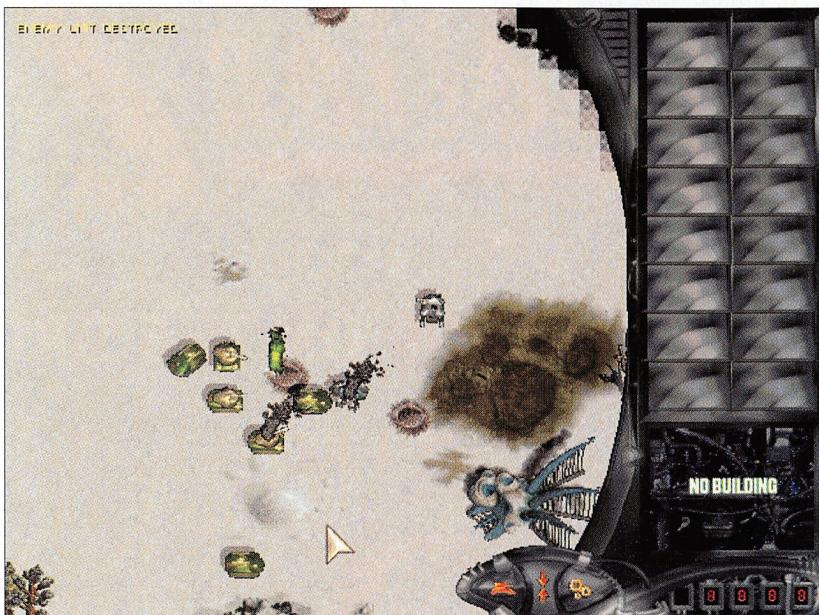
Castrol



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ECHELON

The perfect Christmas present for someone you hate



Another day, another C&C clone' seems to have become the catchcry of the gaming industry. Like the vast majority of these clones, Echelon is entirely lacking in merit.

Three factions (Arutha, Trask and Eriin) inhabit the planet of Ring World. These factions once peacefully coexisted, and united to thwart an invasion attempt by a common enemy.

Unfortunately, at the cessation of hostilities old animosity between the factions resurfaced. They now fight amongst themselves for control of the planet. Lacking in intrigue and originality, the game's plot does very little to motivate the player.

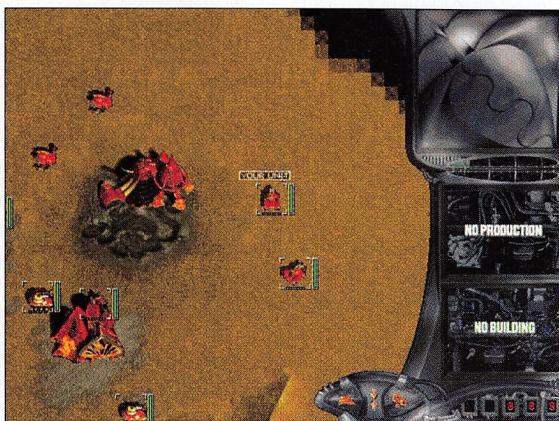
Major design flaws

Echelon's interface is archaic and profoundly convoluted. The game runs only in 640x480 resolution, meaning the player's monitor resolution must be altered accordingly. This, in turn, causes the game to run in a window. As a result, the map view must be scrolled using either the cursor keys or the right mouse button to click-and-drag. The game's programmers have also opted to implement a construction side-bar that employs a two second animation to switch between building



and unit menus. In a RTS game this kind of delay often proves incredibly costly. In addition, the gameplay is hampered by the absence of features (like waypoint navigation) that are considered standard in many competing games. These are just three examples of major design flaws that are alarmingly prevalent in this title.

Both friendly and enemy AI is absolutely ludicrous. Take the smarts of a C&C harvester driver, divide it by ten, and you have Echelon's AI algorithm. So ineffective is the AI, that friend-



If you sat down and tried to make the most derivative, boring, drab and antiquated RTS possible, it'd probably still be better than this

ly units ordered to a specific point will completely ignore any enemy units that attack them en route. Enemy AI is similarly ineffectual, with the dreaded tank rush being the sole means by which the player's opponent seeks to overwhelm them.

Insulting

With three factions available, the player could be forgiven for assuming that almost limitless long-term gameplay would abound. Sadly, the only differences between each faction's buildings and units are their names and appearances. A grand total of 9 units and 8 buildings are available to each faction, and the total number of missions within the game numbers a mere 5 per faction.

Coupled with antiquated

PLUS+ graphics that

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www.blizzard.com/star/star.htm

This is how it's done

are barely on par with Red Alert's, the inherent problems of this game are blatantly apparent. Being nothing more than an insult to the genre, Echelon is unworthy of even the most cursory contemplation of its purchase.

Brett Robinson

15%

Category RTS

Players 1

Publisher Arena Games

Price \$TBA

Rating G

Available TBA

For This game furthers the case for the OFLC to adopt a new BW (Bin-Worthy) classification.

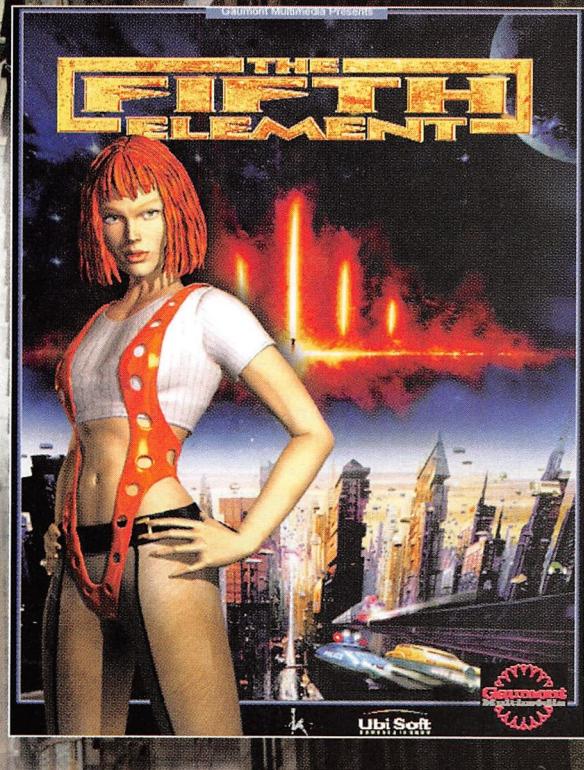
Against Because the box and its contents can't be recycled, Echelon will contribute to Australia's environmental problems by depleting already scarce landfill space.

Need P100, 16MB RAM, Win9x/NT

Want P166, 32MB RAM

Play
with me....

Now on
your PC



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CREATURES 2

Much more than desktop Tamagotchi

In recent times, the development of advanced Artificial Intelligence (AI) algorithms has led to impressive improvements in character interaction and increased realism within game worlds. Taking the concept a step further are Mindscape who, in conjunction with CyberLife, have produced an advanced simulation of life itself. The implications of such technology extend far beyond the boundaries of interactive entertainment, and have commercial applications within a broad spectrum of industries. Bearing testament to the far reaching scope of this budding technology is the fact that Cyberlife has secured research contracts with numerous telecommunications companies and defence institutions. Mindscape has isolated and utilised various components of CyberLife's Artificial Life (A-life) program to produce a fascinating and thoroughly engaging game.

Intelligence of a 2 year old

Set in the fictional world of Albia, Creatures 2 allows the player to hatch and nurture furry little beasts called Norns. Bearing more than a passing resemblance to the Mogwai from the Gremlins movies, Norns are highly intelligent by animal standards. As with human babies, Norns possess numerous instinctive behavioural characteristics, but must be taught more advanced methods of environmental interaction and survival. The analogy between Norns and human babies is actually quite accurate. Fundamental to successfully raising Norns is an understanding of the fact that their intelligence levels are on par with those of a two year old child.

From the moment of birth, the inquisitive bundles of fur explore their surroundings with all the enthusiasm of Boris Yeltsin in a Smirnoff factory. It is during these early stages of



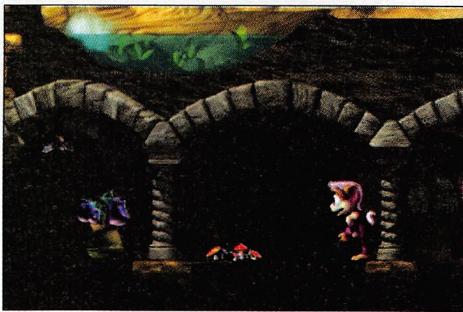
What at first glance seems to be a fairly limited game is actually very stimulating, with plenty of long term value



fied, to an extent, by a versatile and intuitive interface.

Scratching and spanking

Primarily, a mouse pointer in the form of a hand is used to navigate within the interface. The hand is used to attract the attention of the player's Norns to the immense array of objects liberally scattered throughout Albia. Combining the hand with the keyboard, the player is able to designate an object, then give the object a name which the Norns



Cute, furry, fluffy, lovable. Just don't feed them after midnight...

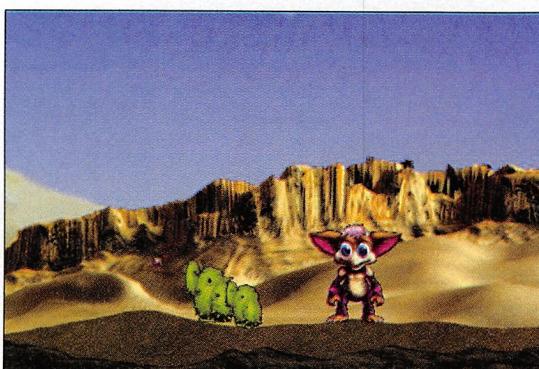
will associate with it. As the Norns attempt to grasp new concepts, repetition of words is required. Well-behaved Norns, and those who learn quickly, can be rewarded with a friendly scratch on the nose. Conversely, those who ignore orders or behave in an antisocial fashion can be reprimanded with a light spank on the behind.

The keyboard can also be used to issue simple commands such as "press button" or "get toy". Learning computers (similar to the fondly-remembered "Speak and Spell" of the mid eighties) are used to expand each Norn's vocab-

each Norn's vocabulary. As the Norns learn new words and phrases, they are better able to express themselves; thus making the job of caring for them marginally simpler. As both their vocabularies and intellects increase, Norns are able to respond to more complex orders and are even able to solve puzzles.

Birds and the bees

In order to maintain a high level of interest in the game, Mindscape have compressed the lifetime of a Norn to approximately two hours. This ensures that players who have very little time to tend to their Norns will



still find the experience extremely rewarding. Albia itself is a highly complex, self-contained ecosystem with flora and fauna that behave much like their real world counterparts. Indigenous creatures (including Norns) rely on plant and animal matter for food, while plants rely on insects and animals for cross pollination. Seasons and weather phenomena also have both beneficial and adverse effects on Albia's inhabitants. Although Norns could be considered the dominant species on Albia, the world is also inhabited by equally advanced creatures called Ettins and Grendels.



Ettins are industrious creatures with a genuine talent for construction and lateral thinking, while Grendels are just plain evil. As the player progresses, both the Ettins and Grendels become integral parts of the game's underlying plot. It is, however, when Norns reach sexual maturity that *Creatures 2* becomes really interesting.

Mephisto madness

Norn sexual maturity directly correlates with the onset of Summer. It is during this time that Ettins and Grendels are most active due to a substantial increase in their sex drives. Using an advanced gene splicing system, it is possible for the player to cross not only Norns with other members of their own species, but with Ettins and Grendels. Because 50% of the genetic code is passed on from each parent, dominant and recessive traits are also passed on with unpredictable results. Mutations can and do occur, and advancement of existing species (not to

PLUS⁺



ation of new ones) is where Creatures 2's attraction lies. With DNA comprised of over 550 different genes, the possible combinations are limitless.

Dismissing Creatures 2 as merely a desktop Tamagotchi would be a grave error of judgement. It is one of the most interesting and enjoyable games ever, and will particularly appeal to those with an interest in genetics.

Brett Robinson

86%

Category	Life sim
Players	1-Multi
Publisher	Mindscape
Price	\$69.95
Rating	G8+
Available	TBA

For An intellectually stimulating game that will keep players coming back for months. The limitless long term value is further enhanced by the ability to trade Norns online.

Against Patience is required and some aspects of the interface could use improvement

Need P166, 16MB RAM,
300MB HD Space

Want P233, 32MB RAM

APACHE

HAVOC



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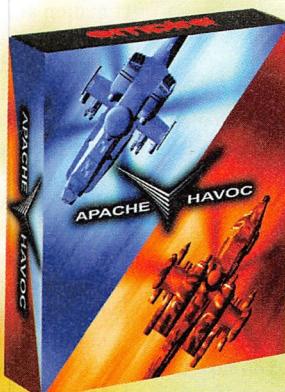


East Meets West in an apocalyptic clash of the Superpowers as the US Apache Longbow and the Russian Havoc go head to head in the most incredible helicopter sim ever seen on a PC.

But it's not just supermodel looks that makes Apache Havoc stand out from the crowd; easily accessible yet deeply challenging gameplay, an intense and absorbing atmosphere and super-fast speeds also make it the flying experience of a lifetime.

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- ★ Blistering multi-player campaigns, up to 32 players via serial, modem, LAN or internet.
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- ★ Fantastic stereo sound effects and speech.
- ★ Direct3D® support, compatible with most 3D accelerator cards.

TWO GREAT FLIGHT SIMS ONE GREAT GAME

NBA LIVE '99

"It's in the game", say EA. So, can players go on strike then? I see no strike button!

NBA Live was a damn impressive title. The thing that overshadowed just about every other aspect of its development (and even its implementation), was the use of texture-mapped faces of real NBA stars on the computer-players' bodies. It was quite spectacular. There was one unpredicted response though to the implementation of texture maps. The players faces were, well, quite static. Your favourite player, after sinking a 3-pointer, would be wearing a multi-million-dollar-and-don't-you-forget-the-advertising-campaign-on-the-side smile. Cool, it seemed right. Your favourite player, after fouling the opposition and being ridiculed by the referee, would be wearing that same smile. Er, hold on. Your favourite player, after being fouled out of the game, would still be wearing that irritating smile. Okay now, it just was not funny. The effect was actually quite unnerving to many. The textures brought a new level of character to the game, but at the same time, a new level of artificiality.

Uncertain smile

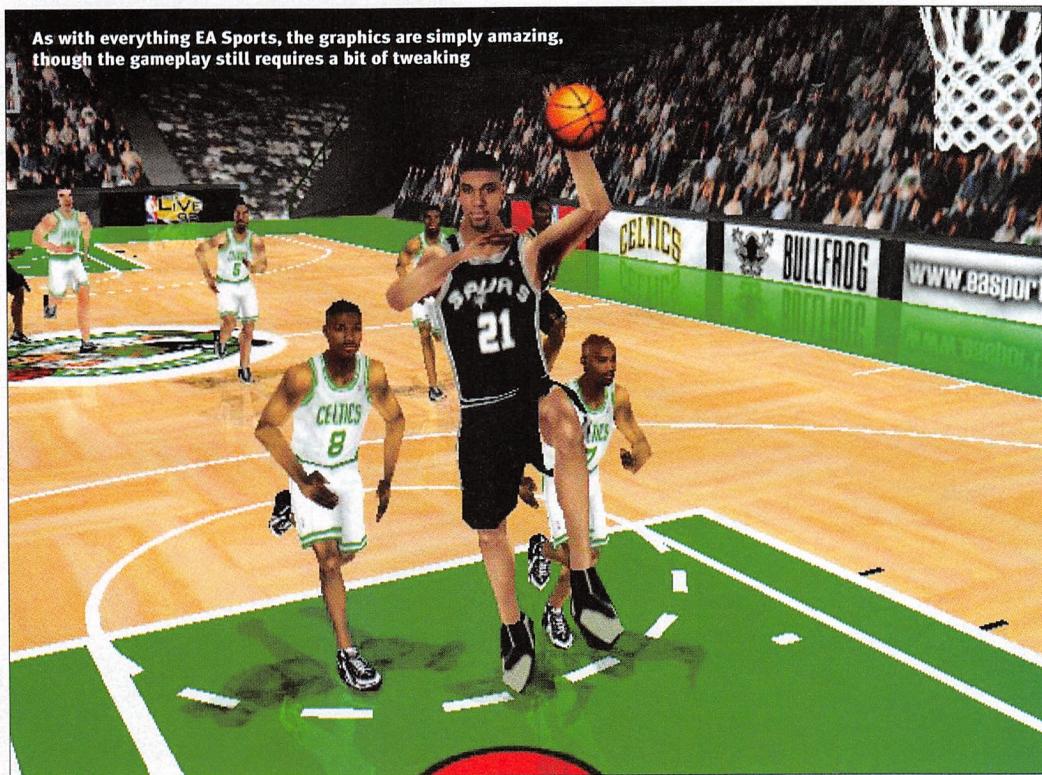
Well NBA Live '99, yet again, is going to turn some heads due to its use of texture maps of real players' faces. This time around, EA have programmed over 30 different facial expressions into the title. So rather than the obligatory "smile after buggering up an almost glorious slam dunk", Live '99 makes a decent attempt at expressing a more colourful and appropriate range of emotions within the game. From the smirk to the glare, the blank sigh

(which many basketball

PLUS+

<http://www.easports.com/99/nba99/index.html>
Go here to download the most recent and correct player rosters for the game.

As with everything EA Sports, the graphics are simply amazing, though the gameplay still requires a bit of tweaking



stars, surprisingly, have perfected) or the "don't mess with me or I'll hurt your Mercedes" smile, it's all there. There are still some glitches in its implementation though, and you've got wooden block expressions that change in that wooden block expression kind of way. It is a move forward however, from the static faces seen in last year's effort, and more importantly, gameplay hardly seems to suffer (in any obvious way at least) because of it.

Minor enhancements

Gameplay isn't really enhanced by the feature, either. That's not to say there's no justice in putting a 99 in the title. NBA Live '99 contains all the usual minor enhancements gleaned only after a whole year of think tank and brain-storming sessions. This time around you've got more on court chatter, from the crowd to the coaches, and referees to the players themselves. You now have ability to custom create your own team, from the ground up. A 10 season General Manager play option is included, with the com-



puter now giving you advice on which players you should keep or trade away come pre-season. There's also the usual addition of a few new frames of player animation and moves, as well as a handful of new over-the-top slam dunks. And it's all presented in that style that EA do so well.

All this attention to live stats and real players and official NBA backing serves as a reminder that EA make a helluva NBA simulation. All the of the NBA is in this one. With options modes a plenty (giving you anything from an arcade style game to a simulation one), and a stronger AI this time around, NBA Live '99 is by far the most comprehensive and enjoyable basketball game out there at the moment.

March Stepnik

86%

Category Sports
Players 1-4
Publisher EA Sports
Price \$89.95
Rating G
Available TBA

For NBA Live '99 is all options. You can play anything from an arcade game with butchered basketball to a full-blown simulation. Plays a great game of basketball.

Against Controls can still be confusing and intimidating.

Need Pentium, 16MB RAM, Windows 9x

Want P200, 32MB RAM, 3D accelerator.

3D SUPPORT

Direct3D

Beware:
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swims, skis, climbs...

RAYMAN 2

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DETECTIVE BARBIE

At the next Federal election, the 'Come on Barbie, let's go party' Party will require that boys and girls everywhere wear pink mini skirts.

Developer: Mattel Multimedia

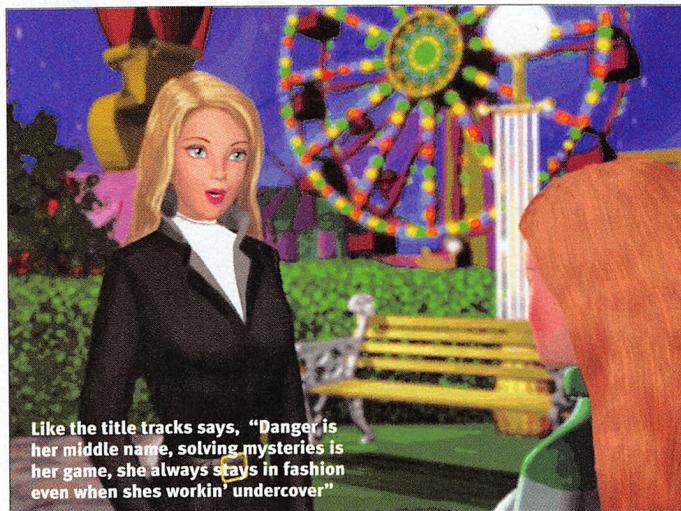
What a lovely idea, a charity carnival to raise funds for the needy, it's going to be just super! But wait! Oh No! Ken's gone missing, and so has the charity money! Thank god we just graduated from Jr Detective school, otherwise I positively wouldn't know what to do!

And so, we enter Barbie's world, where a clue is never too far at hand. Armed with a magnifying glass, Barbie is your detective partner, helping you bust open the case. When you do find a clue, pass it on to Becky, the 'Cyberwiz' to process it, and give you a hint to who the Villain is.

Could it be Madam Wanda, the carnival magician? Ken was volunteer for a disappearing trick in which he didn't reappear (could the Madam be up to

her old trix)? Or is it Burt Franklin, carnival owner and resident clown? Maybe it was Jake Franklin, Son of Burt and Day to Day manager (did daddy cut off his allowance)? Perhaps it was Artie, the carnival handyman (he's been and seen everything and everyone - just what HAS he seen)?

This game is so cheesy it almost takes away from the pure pinkness of it all. Picture an episode of Scooby Doo where Freddy goes missing. Daphne is left to solve the case with Velma processing the clues BUT WITHOUT DRUGS OR FUNKY 70'S DISCO TRACKS. This is essentially what the game is, complete with the villain in the back seat of the cop car saying "I would have got away with it too, if it wasn't for those meddling kids!" and Shaggesque one liners like "I hope you play again



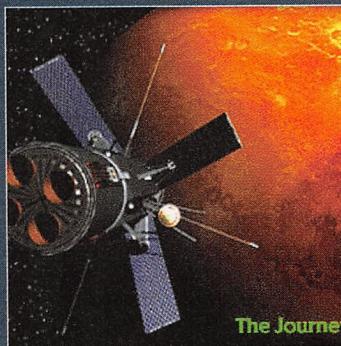
Like the title tracks says, "Danger is her middle name, solving mysteries is her game, she always stays in fashion even when shes workin' undercover"

soon, don't disappear". The chase sequences really are a cut below the rest, but that's to be expected from Barbie software made for girls.

It's salvation, in my eyes. 1) it's Barbie (the bitch has every-

thing), and 2) with over 40,000 names on file, I can choose my name and hear Barbie say it throughout the game. I found this a bigger turn on than all the Laras in the world.

Agata Budinska



Developer: Dreamcatcher Interactive

Way back in the mid seventies, the Viking probe caused a fair bit of a stir. The probe, launched by NASA, photographed a region of Mars known as Cydonia Mensae. While scientists around the world were whipped into a frenzy over gloriously boring shots of dust and rocks, a startling discovery was made. A "structure" in this region resembled, even without having to squint or use much of an imagination, a face. Due South of this face, was also found what appeared to be a Pentapyrramid. No longer just a scientist's wet dream, the discovery captivated a global audience. This was

CYDONIA MARS: THE FIRST MANNED MISSION

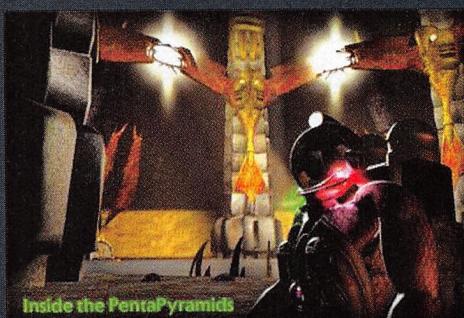
Everyone knows that the Martians built the pyramids. And shot JFK. And Elvis is their King.

because it was the first ever promising sign of any sign of civilised life on a planet other than our own. Twenty years later, and countless shonky "Alien Conspiracy" TV specials later, we're still fascinated by the whole thing. Today though, things are a little different. We've had an official statement suggesting that the face is most likely just a totally uncanny coincidence.

Which brings us to Cydonia - Mars: The First Manned Mission. Planned and created before the controversial announcement was made, Cydonia deals with the idea that life does exist on Mars. It's more of an educational entertainment title or game, than anything else. Set in the year 2012, the entire

thing is a fictional adventure based on a very solid premise. As the title suggests, it's the first manned mission to Mars. The purpose is to examine and explore the region, in the vain hope that any sign of life, or the previous existence of life, can be found.

The first portion of the game is a wonderful (and somewhat partial) presentation of the role an astronaut plays on a space mission. Things have gone wrong, and you must ensure the survival of the ship first (as a source of life support), then the crew, and then ultimately the entire mission.



Inside the PentaPyramids

Falling somewhere in between fact and fiction, this is another title to disturbingly blend learning and fun

Eventually you come across an alien culture...

An interesting sci-fi fantasy title with strong, non-fictional roots. And it's quite intelligent too. This title is perfect for parents wanting to get their kids thinking in a more lateral way.

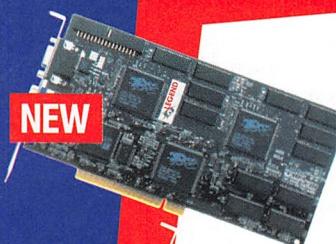
March Stepnik

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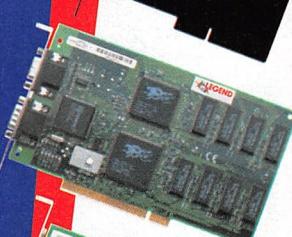


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Available at Myer (all stores), Dick Smith, Chandlers Superstores, Archie Martins, Billy Guyatt, Harvey Norman (all stores), Clive Peters, Radio Rentals (SA only), and all popular computer outlets.



Developer: Hasbro Interactive Dreamworks Inc

It seems everyone was prepared for the inevitable flood of merchandise Small Soldiers would spawn, but I don't think many were prepared for this. Globotech have just sent word that Small Soldiers figurines have become a hit, and the demand is high. You have been chosen out of a possible 200 to become Globotech's new principal toy designer. Your mission? To create the ultimate in the new line of Small Soldiers Action Figures! Your reward? To become Chief toy designer at Globotech! Woohoo!

But it's not that simple. In order to prove you're the right guy for the job, you have to bat-

SMALL SOLDIERS

GLOBOTECH DESIGN LAB

Build a better toy



Does anyone else find it disturbing when a movie that decries rampant capitalism and commercialism has so much merchandising attached to it?

tle it out in 25 rounds with your enemy. Alright, this is where the fun starts. Creating a figure using the parts of existing characters is a crack up. Choose limbs, torso and a head, give it some moves, a few taunting remarks, and the

ever important chip that makes them come to life. A way funky feature is the paint section. Choose from khaki green to red leopard print to dress your guy in, and you've got a soldier fit for the Village People. Take him to the battle arena, where you fight in various rooms of the house against the enemy (Commando Elite or Gorgonite) and duke it out till someone

explodes in a shower of plastic limbs. The moves are both practical and hysterical, with choice from a range of punches, kicks, spastic flailing of arms and the ever popular headbutt. With 3D accelerated graphics, it looks like a beefed up version of Double Dragon, where bars of soap and cheese graters replace the standard chains and daggers (hey, they are SMALL Soldiers).

Watching your character slowly being broken apart is always good for a laugh, especially when you get down to just two legs and a torso (think Monty Python's Black Knight).

All in all, Small Soldiers Globotech Design Lab is a gratuitous merchandise and marketing tool, but dang, it's made well, and it will keep you inane smiling for a while to come.

Agata Budinska

SMALL SOLDIERS

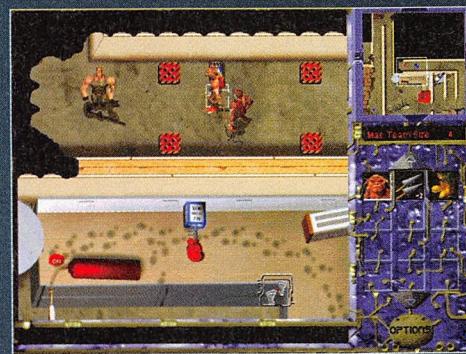
SQUAD COMMANDER

Start a toy war

Developer: Hasbro Interactive Dreamworks Inc

You know, you could be fooled into initially thinking, cool, a Small Soldiers strategy game. You've loaded it up, watched the oh so cool intro, a brief clip of Chip Hazard and Archer slapping each other around with a limb. You think, cool, that's Tommy Lee Jones's voice, just like in the movie. You listen to the banter and initially chose to play the Gorgonites, cause they seem a passive bunch. You start the actual game, and low and behold, it's nice, simple graphics, with nice simple multi-purpose cursor, and those trademark annoying acknowledge lines ("That's Easy", "Wise Decision" and "It's Your Call") are all part of the package.

It's all there: Running around



the neighbourhood houses, discovering you're smaller than a toilet, but big enough to climb stairs and open doors, blowing up your enemy's weapon supplies, generally doing the stuff you expect from a movie to game conversion. You think to yourself, "yeah, I could see myself up all night addicted to the sheer simplicity of it," almost like a Solitaire kind of situation. And



Just like the movie, this is simple, silly, straightforward, and too hard for anyone over fourteen

indeed, the first few levels were easy enough. You sit back and enjoy the cut scenes, similar to the one in the intro, that acts as a narrator to piece the story together. Hey! This

is looking pretty good! You then start the next level, and it's more of the same, except maybe for a few more enemy toys to track down and kill. But hang on, how come you've got 12 spare men? Isn't that a bit excessive for a game? But never fear, it hits you rather soon, because you just keep on dying, cause you can't take too many hits, and you have to start at the beginning of the

level, it's all so clear! You then start to get annoyed that you can only carry one item at a time, whether it's boots to make you run faster or a cherry bomb to blow stuff up. When you've weaved to the same point on the same level for the 8th time, you lose hope (with the last two men in the toy box reserve, what else can you do?).

Just as you're about to give up, an 8 year old comes in and shows you the way through. You then come to the realisation that you are just too old for this game.

Agata Budinska

A NIGHT OUT WITH THE LADS



WILL NEVER BE THE SAME AGAIN...



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RAINBOW 6

TACTICAL PLAYGUIDE

He who plans, wins! By Maj. Ian Lindgren

As we move away from the bipolar nature that dominated world politics for the last 50 years, we enter a new millennium where the threat of nuclear holocaust from Russia and the US is almost negligible. This new society comprises of many nation states, religious groups and multinational companies who have sufficient wherewithal to conduct politically motivated violence (PMV) against the nations that were once, and still are, super powers.

Let's take a look at the skills you require to deal with PMV in Rainbow 6 (R6). Firstly I'll cover the weapons of the trade. Then personnel, because you must use each of your troopers' strengths and weaknesses to your advantage in order to win; you must know them as you know yourself. I'll then discuss mission tactics before giving you my suggestions for completing each of the 16 missions. Finally I'll give you some cheat codes for those who like them.

PRIMARY WEAPONS

H&K MP5A2



This is usually the program's default weapon suggestion for most missions, and is one of the most accurate submachine guns in the world. It uses 9mm rounds in single, three-round, and fully automatic fire, but is not silenced. So only use it when you want to enter without stealth.

H&K MP5SD



This weapon is the same as the MP5A2, except it is silenced. It

fires with less noise than that of its breach operation! Use this when you don't want to make noise. I recommend its use in almost all situations because you can always maintain stealth to your advantage. Whereas once you have indicated your presence, you can never retract it, and have therefore taken away any benefit of surprise.

M16A2



The

M16A2 assault rifle uses 5.56 calibre rounds that pierce Level II body armour. In R6 it has a low power sight and single, three round, and fully automatic trigger setting. It is powerful and has the range for sniping, but is too large for indoor work.

CAR-15



The

CAR-15 is a smaller version of the M16A2. It is not silenced and is therefore a good weapon for heavy assault missions where stealth is not a concern.

Benelli M1



A

12 gauge shotgun, the Benelli is often used by demolitions experts for door breaching or highly lethal close quarters combat.

SECONDARY WEAPONS

H&K MK23 and

MK23-SD

The H&K MK 23 is a .45 calibre weapon used as R6's standard issue secondary weapon. It is accurate and

dependable, but if you've got to rely on a pistol in your mission, you're in serious trouble! The MK23-SD is the silenced version.

H&K USP, USP-SD



This is the .40 calibre version of the MK23. In my opinion, if you've got to use a handgun, then use a big one! Stick with the MK 23SD.

OTHER INVENTORY ITEMS

These tools complement your primary weapons. Know what they do, how they do it, then make sure the right person is carrying the right inventory to perform the team's job. Here are some of the Inventory Items.

Flashbangs

Flashbangs are used to disorientate.



But be careful, they are a double-edged weapon, because they also have an effect on team members as they go off; even if you are expecting it, it will temporarily reduce your team's aiming ability. Hold the left mouse button down longer to throw them further.

Frag grenades

When you are sure there are no hostages inside a room use a frag grenade instead. Why expose yourself to unnecessary risk? Hold the left mouse button down longer to throw them further.



Heartbeat sensor

A cool piece of kit this one. It tracks the heartbeats of all nearby humans, indicating the locations of all



terrorists and hostages. However, you must discriminate who is who! You should equip each team leader and one or two other troopers with one of these. If your leader is the only one carrying one, you can't use the device if he goes down. Use it to ready yourself to enter a building, and as soon as you see the terrorists move to a position that will aid your insertion...go, go, go!

Door charges

The explosive rig is used to blow open doors. They should not be used on missions that require stealth, but they are effective at stunning and wounding nearby persons. Once again, use the Heartbeat Sensor to coordinate insertion; just for kicks do it when a terrorist is behind the door...it saves on rounds!

Miscellaneous Accoutrements

I found that for most missions the default uniform is ideal for the mission, with the exception of Mission 7 when Biosuits are needed. Feel free to experiment, but be aware that heavy body armour is noisy and fatigues each team member quickly, thus rendering him or her less effective. It's a trade-off thing.

RAINBOW 6

 <p>READY</p> 	<p>NAME Chavez, Ding</p> <p>IDENTIFICATION NUMBER RCT0047-X0566</p> <p>NATIONALITY American</p> <p>SPECIALTY Assault</p> <p>DATE OF BIRTH 12 Jan 68</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="background-color: #00008B; color: white; padding: 5px;">STATS</th> <th style="background-color: #00008B; color: white; padding: 5px;">HISTORY</th> <th style="background-color: #00008B; color: white; padding: 5px;">MEDICAL</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">AGGRESSION</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">95</td> <td style="padding: 5px;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">LEADERSHIP</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">100</td> <td style="padding: 5px;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">SELF-CONTROL</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">92</td> <td style="padding: 5px;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">STAMINA</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">97</td> <td style="padding: 5px;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">TEAMWORK</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">94</td> <td style="padding: 5px;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">DEMOLITIONS</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">71</td> <td style="padding: 5px;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">ELECTRONICS</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">67</td> <td style="padding: 5px;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">FIREARMS</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">100</td> <td style="padding: 5px;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">GRENADES</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">74</td> <td style="padding: 5px;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">STEALTH</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">100</td> <td style="padding: 5px;"></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	STATS	HISTORY	MEDICAL	AGGRESSION	95		LEADERSHIP	100		SELF-CONTROL	92		STAMINA	97		TEAMWORK	94		DEMOLITIONS	71		ELECTRONICS	67		FIREARMS	100		GRENADES	74		STEALTH	100	
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	IDENTIFICATION NUMBER	RCT0022-A4242			
	NATIONALITY	Israeli			
	SPECIALTY	Recon			
	DATE OF BIRTH	03 Mar 73			
	STATS		HISTORY		MEDICAL
	AGGRESSION	95			
	LEADERSHIP	65			
SELF-CONTROL	70				
STAMINA	95				
TEAMWORK	75				
DEMOLITIONS	30				
ELECTRONICS	86				
FIREARMS	97				
GRENADES	60				
STEALTH	97				

PERSONNEL

In Rainbow Six, no one is expendable, except the terrorists. Just like being a soldier, it's not your job to die for your country; it's to make the enemy die for his! If you keep that in mind when you sit down to plan each mission you are off to a good

start. Read the profiles of each member and write down their capabilities. Then at the planning phase of each mission review their fatigue levels to see who is capable to go and who either needs a rest or shouldn't take the lead this time.

BRIEFING

Operation: Sun Devil
08.03.00 0630 BRAZIL

CONTROL

COMMANDER
John Clark

ADVISOR
John Brighting

ADVISOR
Hilze Lang

MISSION ORDERS

OBJECTIVES:

Rescue workers

John has briefed me on your previous operations... very impressive.

As you are no doubt aware, the current administration has a strong commitment to environmental issues. Over the past four years we've launched a number of programs designed to encourage corporations to encourage earth-friendly economic development. The Rainforest 2000 Project provides incentives for companies to develop sites in the Amazon River basin.

Hilze has committed millions of dollars to build several state-of-the-art research stations and conservation hospitals in the tremendous biological diversity of the rainforest. Now with the trouble this can Calderon has been causing, work has completely stopped. It's terribly frustrating to see an important project like this held hostage by a

Receive the mission briefing. Click on each of the advisors on the left to receive the full mission briefing.

SURE PLAN
LOAD PLAN

MAIN MENU

CATEGORIES

PEOPLE

ORGANIZATIONS

NEWSPAPERS

MUSIC

Summer Games 2000
Feds Raid Matrix
Inquiry Abuse
Banks Raided
Attack on Big Thumper
Attack on New Zealand

INTEL

Operation: Red Wolf
09.15.00 10:00 AM
BRUSSELS

STATE OF AUSTRALIA: Contact News
The most recent and most intense series of the last century began on 09.15.00 10:00 AM when 1000 athletes from 100 countries gathered in the Sydney stadium for the opening ceremony of the 2000 Olympic Games. The final leg of the 1000 km relay race was run by the Australian sprinter Steve Cram, who crossed the finish line in 1:47.10 sec and a personal best. Over 200,000 spectators roared in approval as the Flame was carried through the stadium by two sets of international torchbearers.

Local celebrities and Spectre agents were present, along with the world's media, dynasties mingling with heads of state. From the United States to the United Kingdom, the French to the Germans, the Chinese to the Japanese, the world exploded high above the city against a backdrop of fireworks, permanent fire, the Sydney Opera House and private security firms. Tough

Sydney 2000 Olympic Games - Select a category and enter to learn more.

HOME PAGE **HOME PAGE**

Your mission, should you choose to accept it: blow up that stupid candle thing in front of the Opera House!

Mission Planning

Listen carefully to the mission briefings, then all the additional information given by Jon Clark and any other adviser. Learn about the hostages, the terrorists and their organisation, and any other form of human intelligence (HUMINT). This builds a mental image of what is going on as you plan the mission.

The mission computer contains detailed blueprints of each mission site. Do not launch an operation before learning as much information about the setting, the size and the strength of your opposition and the location of each mission objective.

When selecting your Fire Teams, resist the temptation to exercise too much control over your best soldiers. Ding Chavez, Daniel Bogart and Jorg Walther need little supervision so long as you make a workable plan.

Go Codes

The best way to ensure success is to have a good plan. Go Codes are the answer. These are coded command words that tell

Fire Teams when to execute specific moves at waypoints. I am all for a co-ordinated action to create simultaneity, so I move all teams into position, then use the Go Code Alpha for simultaneous entry to create maximum surprise. This allows you to control the

progress of the mission and issue different Go Codes as each mission milestone is reached, eg as you clear the 1st and 2nd floors before taking a number of routes to the 3rd floor. Then give another Go Code to exit. Write these down on a sheet of paper, and don't forget that the same go code can be used for all the teams.

TACTICS

He who plans wins! Prior preparation and training prevents poor performance! Two catchcries, but any professional soldier will tell you that they are combat multipliers. By now you should understand the importance of the weapons, personnel and planning. Now you must acknowledge that planning is pre-eminent.

Start at the basics and go through all of the training missions. I recommend the order that they are given in the game, and if you are not good in one area, go back and try again. Remember, if you lose all your demolition members, then need a demo job in one of the last missions, you can't complete the game. So hone your skills.

RAINBOW 6

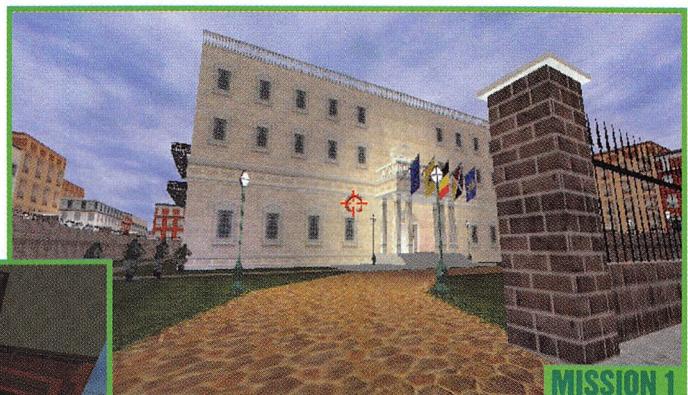
MISSION TIPS

These are my suggestions for completing each of the 16 missions.

Mission 1 OPERATION STEEL WIND

Objective: Rescue the Ambassador on the 2nd floor and embassy worker on the 1st floor.

Position the Red Team on the left side door, Blue Team at the right side door, and Green Team at the fire escape. Initiate Red and Blue on Alpha Go Code thus clearing the 1st floor by stealth. Once completed, issue Go Code Bravo to move the Green Team in to the 2nd floor, clear it and the 3rd floor and secure the Ambassador. Use Go Code Charlie to extract all teams, the Ambassador and the worker.



Mission 2 OPERATION COLD THUNDER

Objective: Rescue Dr. Winston and relief worker.

Move Red, Green and Blue Teams into position near the end of the forest path and have Green and Blue wait for Go Code Bravo. You take Red Team slowly towards the villa and use your sniper scope to take out the five sentries on the near side, and snipe the two terrorists standing guard on the front porch, then hold. Initiate Go Code Bravo, and have Blue and Red clear all terrorists on the ground floor before going upstairs with Green to eliminate the two first floor terrorists and escorting Dr. Winston back to the extraction zone.



Level 7, then climb the ladder to level 8 and into the nearby room. Have it wait for Go Code Bravo. At the same time take Green to snipe the terrorist patrolling on the walkways of Level 9 then move up to the same room as Blue Team. Green Team should then eliminate the terrorist patrolling the halls outside the Hostage Room and rescue the hostages. All bombs should be disarmed as you have eliminated the terrorists near them.

should move to the left of the building, entering through the first open back door it reaches. Move this team forward through the kitchen and have it wait halfway down the hallway for Go Code Charlie. Issue Go Code Charlie. Red should enter and clear the room in front of it, while Blue moves rapidly forward toward the basement steps taking out the terrorists and escorting the hostages back to the extraction zone. If Blue is not quick, the terrorist will execute the hostages. Don't forget to frag Calderon's room.

Mission 3 OPERATION ANGEL WIRE

Objectives: Rescue the oil rig crewmembers and disarm the bombs.

Have Red Team enter the rig from the far insertion zone, while Blue and Green Teams enter from the near zone. Red should proceed all the way up to Level 9, moving into the level's large central hallway. Have it wait there for Go Code Bravo. Move Blue Team up the stairs to

Mission 4 OPERATION SUN DEVIL

Objectives: Rescue the construction workers and eliminate Calderon.

With Red and Blue Teams waiting for a Go Code Alpha behind the estate's large outer wall, have Green Team move to the main entrance and use the sniper scope to take out the guard patrolling the upstairs patio. On Go Code Alpha Red should move to the right side of the building to the central plaza area and wait for Go Code Charlie. Concurrently Blue Team

hostages in a sequential manner. Once this is well underway, send in Green Team from the front door and extract the hostages.

Mission 6 OPERATION BLUE SKY

Objectives: Rescue Roland Kunst and disarm all three bombs.

First up, expect to do this one a few times before you get it right; this place is a rabbit warren! Do a thorough recon then send Blue Team down to the main control room to eliminate all terrorists and disarm bomb 1. Send Red Team straight down from level 14 to level 2 taking out all terrorists and disarming bomb 2. Have Red and Blue wait for Go Code Delta. On Delta, send Green down to seize Roland Kunst and Red and Blue down to Level 1 to disarm the final bomb.



RAINBOW 6



Missions 7 and 8

Objectives: Eliminate all terrorists and prevent the leaders from escaping.

These are good missions... take no prisoners!! Even if they surrender!



MISSION 9

Mission 9 OPERATION RED WOLF

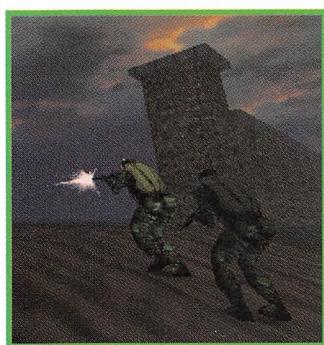
Objective: Rescue all the hostages.

A simple mission this one. Send Red and Blue in through the side entrance near the back of the building and have them move to the main printing-press room. Move Blue Team over to the far side of the room, facing the stairs leading up to the grated floor level. Have Red Team snipe the two terrorists on the upper floor on its side of the room, then have Blue team do the same on the other side. Once that's done, both should move upstairs to the Press Room. Once the path is clear, send in either team to rescue the Hostages from the Hostage Room.

Mission 11 OPERATION YELLOW KNIFE

Objectives: Deactivate security, bug downstairs and upstairs phone, and get back to the extraction zone.

Use a single team member on this mission and have him rely heavily on the heartbeat sensor. Disarm the security console. Then move outside and back inside at the next room to plant the bug on the downstairs phone. When that is done, move upstairs via the stairwell closest to the front of the house to the phone and plant the bug. Extract yourself watching the heartbeat sensor all the way; you must not be seen or engaged.



Mission 10 OPERATION RAZOR ICE

Objective: Rescue Dr. Winston again!

In this mission use Red and Blue to secure all decks prior to sending Green downstairs to the engine room to take out the final terrorist and escort Dr. Winston back to the extraction zone.

Mission 12 OPERATION DEEP MAGIC

Objectives: Deactivate security, download files, and return to the extraction zone.

Again, use a single team member on this operation. Move down off the roof and descend to Level 3. Move into the security system room and deactivate the security cameras, then move back into the hallway when you're sure that no terrorists are nearby. Move to the outer stairwell that leads up to level 5. Locate Brightling's

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CIVILIZATION
CALL TO POWER

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PARSONS

HEAVY
GEAR
II



Yea be
classified

RAINBOW 6



office. Enter the room, download the files, and get back to the extraction zone on the roof when you have a clear path back to the stairs.

Mission 13 OPERATION LONE FOX

Objective: Capture Hendrickson

Due to concurrent missions being conducted in Brazil, you must organise two separate operations using the standard Rainbow Roster. Any team members sent to Australia will be unavailable for Operation Black Star. Plan and balance your teams carefully.

Use your Blue and Red teams to ambush Hendrickson's convoy, with Red sniping from the ledge above the ambush site. Have Green secure Hendrickson, then make your way to the extraction point using fire and movement, stopping at each major twist in the road, or you will run into a series of ambushes.

Mission 14 OPERATION BLACK STAR

Objective: Rescue all hostages

This one requires all three teams entering the building at the same time on Go Code Alpha. At the Go Code, all three teams should enter the build-



ings, clear them of terrorists, and move toward the hostages to secure them.

Mission 15 OPERATION WILD ARROW

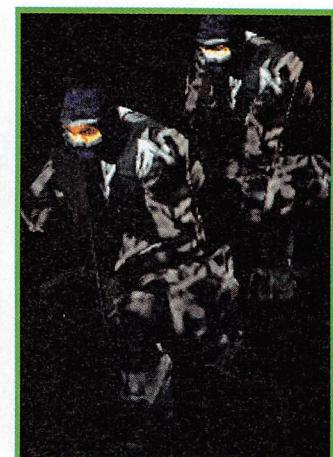
Objectives: Disable security computer and disarm both virus bombs.

You must take direct control of each team and work through this mission step by step because the patrolling terrorists are too much for your Team members' AI. Sequentially move Red and Blue to the two virus bombs and have them wait there for Go Code Alpha. Move Green to the Security Computer and have it wait there for Go Code Bravo. Issue Alpha to disarm both bombs, Bravo to disable the computer, then extract all teams.

Mission 16 OPERATION MYSTIC TIGER

Objective: Capture John Brightling.

Keep your teams together because they provide excellent



fire support for each other.

Start with all three teams in the same insertion zone, the one at the bottom of the planning map, and have them move quickly to a position outside the door to the first security checkpoint. Have a team take out the terrorists on the right side of the checkpoint, then use Go Codes to call in the other teams and blitz the rest of the room.

CHEAT CODES

To use these codes, press the apostrophe key to pull up chat mode, and type them in.

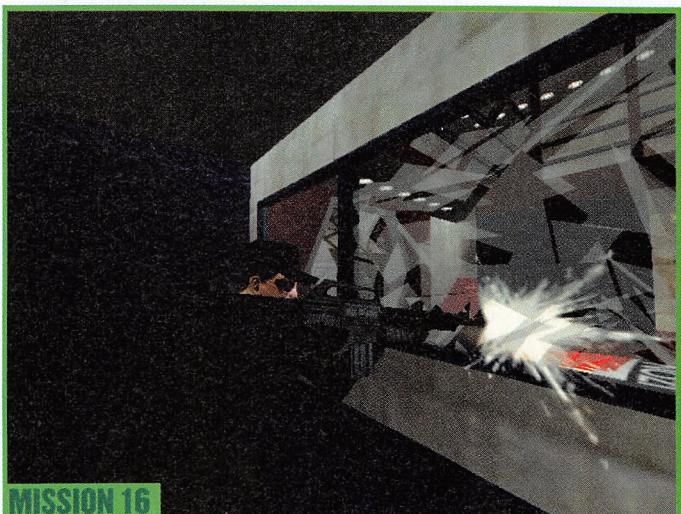
teamgod Team god mode, all the Rainbow Six team members are invulnerable.

avatargod Player god mode, only the player you control is invulnerable.

\\$fingercosplay Provides a fresh supply of ammo.

debugkeys Debug keys enabled or disabled.

silentbutdeadly I'll let you guess what this one does. Just make sure you move around some after you type in the code otherwise you'll miss the joke.



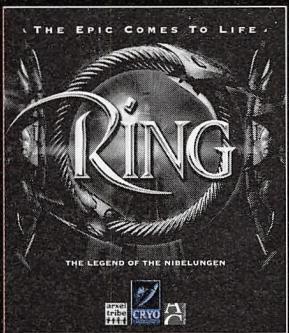


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TIPS & TACTICS

What to do when you don't know what to do

DUNE 2000

- ★ Spread your buildings out. Put them about three or four concrete slabs away from each other. This will make the Death Hand missile less effective, because if it does hit a building, it will only destroy one.
- ★ Don't try to discover the enemy right away. When the enemy knows that you exist, it will launch into "battle mode".
- ★ To guard against engineers, try to keep one light infantryman at the base of every structure just in case your defences are breached.
- ★ Build a Starport or a heavy factory so that you can get a mobile construction vehicle if your main construction yard is destroyed. The prices offered in the Starport change about every five minutes, so keep checking it until a very good price is available before purchasing.

★ Deny the enemy access to the spice fields. You can do this by protecting the fields with tanks and turrets and then wait until the enemy runs out of spice. Once the enemy runs out of spice, the attacks will lessen and then cease. Then it is time to go on the offensive.

★ Build a mobile construction vehicle and then deploy it on the same rock formation as the enemy. Immediately build concrete slabs toward the enemy so that you can build rocket turrets right next to their base. This will keep the enemy occupied while you build up your conventional combat vehicles.

GET MEDIEVAL

★ A skeleton key is basically a timed power-up. If a specific door requires it, do not collect the key until the path is clear. Otherwise, run like crazy and use the skeleton key to open as many chests as possible before time runs out.



★ A well grouped party is the best defence against thieves. Try not to stand in the corner of the screen when opening a chest. If the thief hits you and disappears out of your view, he's almost guaranteed to get away before you can run him down.

ARMY MEN

★ Don't worry about friendly fire, you can't kill your own men with your rifle. The same does not hold true for most of your other weapons though, and you can damage your own vehicles with rifle fire.

★ For the quickest kills in multiplayer games, use Death From Above. Find the enemy Sarge with an Air Recon and then drop an Air Strike or Paratroopers on him.

★ It's important to keep a constant eye on powerups. Scroll the view around because powerups will help you solve a mission.

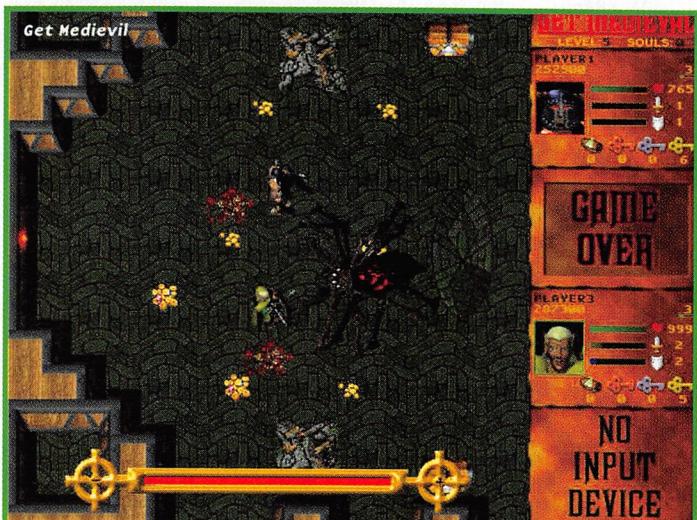
★ When you're surrounded with no place to hide, zigzag away. Just press the numberpad key 8 and alternate hitting the numberpad keys 4 and 9 to

wind your way out of any situation. This works well against rifle power, but not so well against flame throwers.

★ Check your map (F12) for important tips on accomplishing missions.

★ Don't squander air strikes and paratrooper drops in the early missions of a scenario. If you waste an air strike on a group of three infantrymen, you'll feel pretty foolish when you face a Tan tank in the very next mission.

★ Troopers in Defend mode take 25 percent less damage than troopers in Attack mode. Therefore it's better to send a scouting unit out with a succession of short Defend orders, rather than one long Attack order.

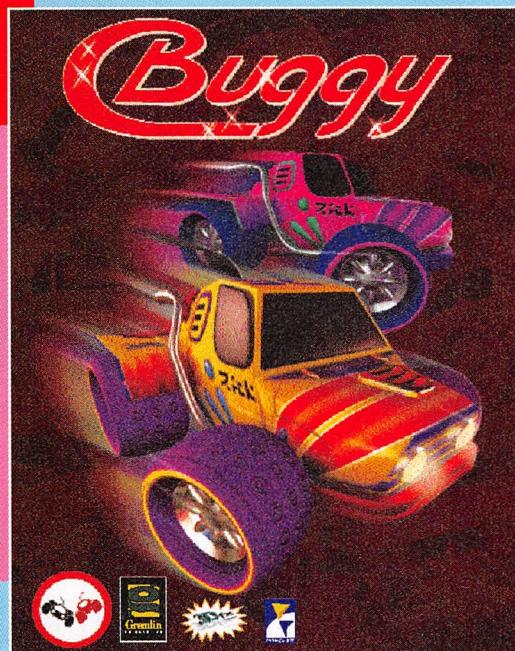


DARE TO BE DIFFERENT?



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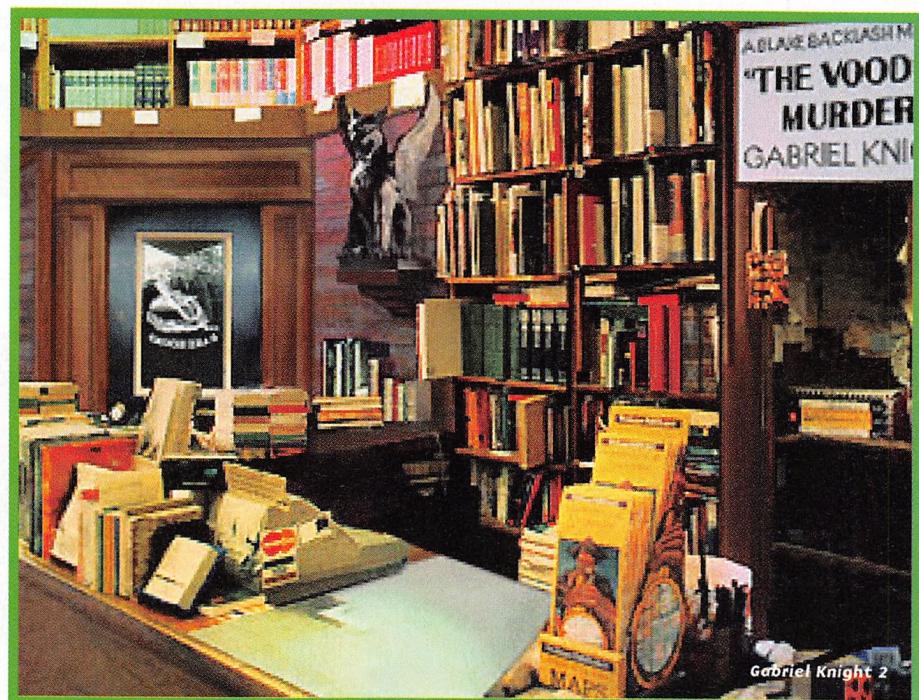
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SWAT 2

! I love SWAT2 and would like to know if there are any cheats or tips for the game? Also do you have any ideas on how to use the MP5? I can't seem to get a grip on the settings. Thanks O'spiritual one.

David Courtney
Glenfield NSW

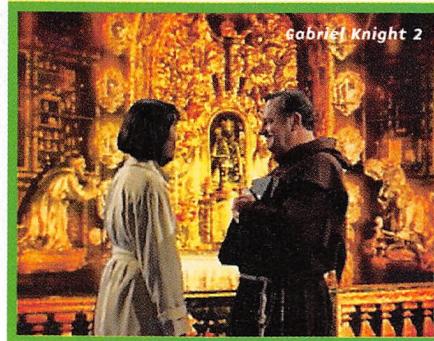
* You'll find some cheats in the codes section this month, use them wisely. In regards to the MP5 question, well it's got three settings; safety on, semi-automatic and automatic. Use semi-automatic to fire one bullet at a time and automatic to fire a continuous stream of bullets. You can choose a setting by clicking on it, then clicking outside the setting box to begin. During the drill, when the instructor tells you to put the gun on safety, select the bottom setting, then click outside the box. If you are still stuck just ask your local postman, I'm sure they'll be happy to help.

CYBERIA

! How the #!%&@ do I progress past the guard behind the glass wall. I'm at the lower level of the complex and everytime I try to walk past him I cop some heavy duty knockout gas.

Nino Paccini
Internet

* Yep, that guard could sure use some breathmints! OK here's what you need to do; watch him closely as every now and then he swivels his chair around to do some work. Sneak past him when he turns away from the window then take the door leading out to the corridor.



GABRIEL KNIGHT 2

! It's been hell. I've fallen into a pit but somehow managed to escape. Now I'm in this lair with this wolf pouncing down on me and Von Glower is standing around like a dummy. How do I escape this nightmare and why is Von Glower such a bastard?

Clint Norwood
Hamilton, NZ

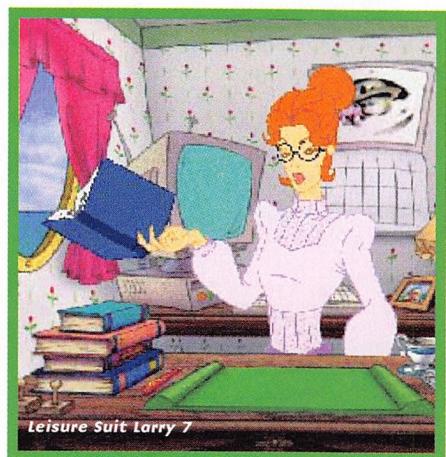
* Wait for the wolf to appear and then use the talisman on it. The wolf will lunge at you. If you are lucky, Von Glower will throw you a gun. Shoot the wolf to break the curse of the werewolf. If you're not lucky, someone's going to have a decent meal tonight. The reason Von Glower can't hear you is because he plugged his ears to block out the sound of the howling and probably his wife's nagging (the howling would cause Von Glower to turn into a werewolf).

LEISURE SUIT LARRY 7

! How does one score with Victorian Principles in the library, she's not interested in having sex at all. Any suggestions on how I can woo her?

Pigman
Bunbury, WA

* Have you considered a head transplant? No, the best way is to swap the book she is reading for something more interesting. First ask her something she doesn't know about and she'll turn her back and look it up on the computer. Take her book, rip its cover off and attach it to the book Drew gave you. Return the book and leave the room. Next time you enter the room she'll be a changed woman and more open to your suggestions.



NEVERHOOD

? How do I access the Strange Machine with the crystals in Neverhood? There doesn't seem any to be clues on what to do, can you help?

Sarah Connors
Mt Lawley, WA

***** The key to this puzzle is the name "bobby" on the outside of the machine. Turn the lights off and go inside the machine. Pressing the red buttons changes the colour of the crystals and pressing the button on the far left activates the machine. What you need to do is change the colours of the crystals to match the letters in the name "bobby." (B = Blue, O = Orange, Y = Yellow.) Match 'em up and press the button.

POLICE QUEST 4

? With Police Quest 4 how do I avoid getting killed at City Hall by Dennis Walker? Can you help me arrest him.

Jason Fitzpatrick
Sunshine Coast, QLD

***** The first thing to do is talk to Dennis Walker. When he starts to attack you quickly take the gun from your inventory and click it on him. Click the talk icon on Dennis to make him freeze and then again to make him drop his weapon. When Dennis Walker is kneeling with his hands on his head, immediately take the handcuffs from your inventory and click them on him. Unlike real life kicking him is not an option.

TOMB RAIDER 2

? Please help me. I just got Tomb Raider 2 and am completely stuck. I am on Bartoli's Hideout. I seem to have killed everyone and don't know what to do next. I am in the room with a fireplace which had a dog and two men in at the top of some stairs.

Antonio Ferris
Bondi, NSW

***** After you have killed the two men and the dog step into the fireplace and push the brick three times. This will reveal a secret passageway which will let you progress further...

**DISCWORLD**

? Hi, I'm a huge fan of Terry Pratchett, his Discworld books are great but the game, well I wish it was a little easier. How do I find the five ingredients of a dragon-locator.

Thelma Sunly
Parramatta, NSW

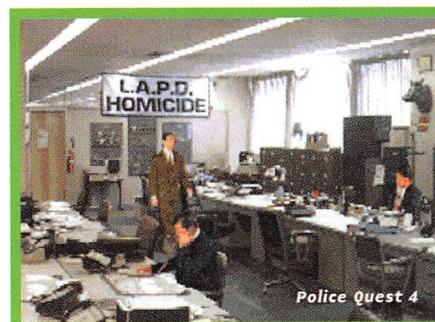
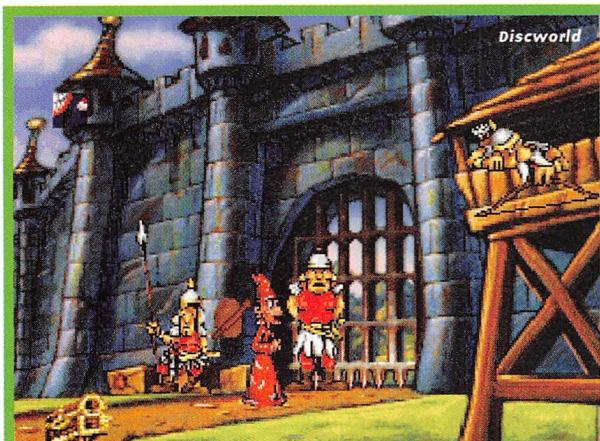
***** Ok here's what you need and where to find it.

Staff: Just exchange the broom with the magical staff from Windle Poons. Be sure to wait for the moment he reaches over to fetch some food, so that the staff is left unguarded.

Imp: Head to the Livery Stable and take some corn out of the sack. Next go to the Alley and visit the alchemist. Use the corn on the flask and you are on the way to getting it out of the camera.

Dragon Breath: First enter the Palace. To bypass the guards just talk with them. Once inside get the mirror from the fools room. Be sure to put the mirror in Rincewinds inventory. Then enter the Alley again, step on the jumping plate, and climb up to the tower. There hang the mirror on the tip of the flagpole and use it to annoy the dragon. He will breathe on the mirror for you.

Magic Coil: Back at the square talk to the street urchin/starfish. He teaches you how to pickpocket. Now go to the barber and look at the hair roller the woman's got in her hair. Talk with her about it. Then talk with the barber and when he thinks about his milkmaid use your pickpocket-skill on his pocket.



Metal Container: Next visit the psychiatrist. If you do this two times, you can get the butterfly net of the wall. Now go to the backside of the university and use the ladder on the window. First put the butterfly net in your private inventory. Then fetch the pancake with the net. If you go back to the kitchen you can take the frying pan now. Take the five items to the arch chancellor and then use the detector to find the hidden dragon lair. It's somewhere in the lower-left corner of the city. I think you deserve the trip to visit Santa after all that...

Tomb Raider 2

Police Quest 4

CODE

Don't get mad, get even. By cheating.

RAGE OF MAGES

Try these cheats during the game

- #**chicken** - Enables cheat mode.
- #**modify self +god** - God mode, or use #**modify army +god**
- #**create gold** - gives you gold.
- #**killall** - kills all enemy units.
- #**pickup all** - picks up all sacks (not including sacks in units).
- #**show map** - Shows the entire map.
- #**hide map** - Hides the map.
- #**event x** - Shows conversations from units in the current level. x is any number.
- #**victory** - End current round in victory

ARMY MEN

During the game just press ESC and type in these codes:

- Triumph** - win mission
- Occultation** - invisible as long as you're not attacking anyone
- Paralysis** - enemy soldiers get frozen and don't attack
- Invulnerable** - Sarge is invulnerable
- Succumb** - lose mission
- Telekinetic** - Sarge gets teleported to another place on the map
- Plethora** - all weapons get maximum ammo
- Pyromancer** - special weapon (right mouse click starts explosions!)
- Kahuna** - get more explosives and be invulnerable
- Aerobalistics** - air supply

REDLINE RACER

Type in one of the following words as your name to get the cheat to work:

- abode** = Drive any bike on any track.
- dissent** = Gives you various stuff.

M.A.X. 2

All campaigns cheat:
Edit the Max2.ini file and use the following settings:

- current_campaign_1_mission=1**
- current_campaign_mission=49**
- last_campaign_played=49**

This should give you access to all campaigns.

PANDEMOMIUM 2

Enter these cheats during the game

- IMMORTAL** = 31 lives
- NEVERDIE** = Invincibility
- HORMONES** = Full health
- GETACCES** = Level select
- OCMCKKEJ** = Level select
- MAKMYDAY** = Weapons
- GONAHURL** = Rolling camera
- SKATBORD** = Speed mode
- GENETICS** = Mutant mode

ACIDDUDE = Psychedelic textures

JUSTKIDN = Regenerating monsters

Level Codes:

EMIAGCAI = 1-Ice Prison

OMACCBAl = 2-Zorrsha's Lab

FAIAGCBI = 3-Hot Pants

FEKAGCCA = 4-Stan's The Man

LGBFIICE = 5-Oyster Desoyster

LMBBIIIE = 6-Puzzle Wood

IEBBIIGF = 7-Temple Of Nori

KNBBIAIAI = 8-Egg! Egg!

LGBJIICI = 9-Huevos Libertad!

LOBJIIEI = 10-Pipe House

IGBJIIGJ = 11-Hate Tank

FFCAGCCC = 12-Fantabulous

FHCAGCCK = 13-Mr. Schneobelen

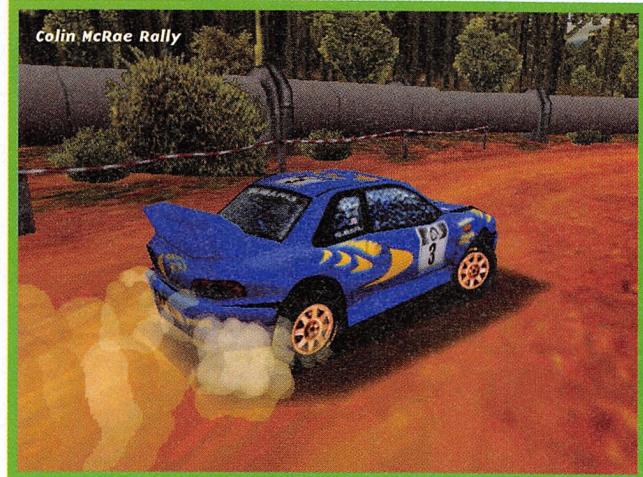
FJKEGCDC = 14-Collide O Scope

FLKEGCDK = 15-The Zoul Train

ADIKBIIIB = 16-Lick The Toad

ADMIBIID = 17-The Bitter End

MAECCBEJ = 18-Rub The Buddha



COLIN MCRAE RALLY

Add these cheats in the Name-Edit-Screen:

TROLLEY = Four-wheel steering

FORKLIFT = Back-wheel steering

HELIUMNICK = Copilot talks like Mickey Mouse

MOREOOMPH = Turbo mode

BLANCMANGE = Rubber car

BACKSEAT = Nicky Grist as copilot

PEASOUPER = All tracks in fog

OPENROADS = Choose all tracks

SHOEBOXES = Choose all cars

BALLS OF STEEL

Press the Print Screen key, then type in the cheat codes.

bucket Kickbacks recharged.

couch potato Video modes ready.

evil twin 2-ball ready.

freakshow Extra ball lit.

nerf gun Super cannon ready.

popcorn Super pops lit.

roach motel Crawler attack lit.

t-minus 1 Target practice ready.

t-minus 2 Bug hunt ready.

t-minus 3 Guard duty ready.

t-minus 4 Xenophobia ready.

t-minus 5 Meteor storm ready.

t-minus 6 Rescue ready.

t-minus 7 Showdown ready.

t-minus 8 Final assault ready.

triplets 3-ball ready.

warp core Powerball enabled.

DIE BY THE SWORD

During gameplay, hold down F1 and type these codes:

mukor = God mode

dedly = weapon enhancer

bamff = warp to end level

tough = changes difficulty level

qsave = quick Save

pause = pauses the game

frame = takes a screenshot

golrg = makes you huge

btiny = makes you tiny

mecam = first person view

gocam = stationary camera shot

spcam = enemy view

gamma = gamma correction

sepku = suicide

Just for fun:

bills = Bill's demo

ifall = knocks you off your feet

hicup = throws you around

silky = stupid monsters

lunar = lunar gravity

funky = toggles funky keys

catch = out of world trapping toggle

aiaim = AI toggle

aggrav = limb gravity

X-COM: INTERCEPTOR

Press CTRL-E and listen for the low double beep before typing these codes:

BATTLECHEAT = enable in-flight cheats

CANTTOUCHTHIS = invincibility

FILLERUP = unlimited flight range

KNOWITALL = all research is yours

QUICKBASE = finishes all bases currently under construction

PAYDAY = money

PRO PINBALL

FunCheat: To play Pro Pinball at a finger-threateningly fast double speed simply achieve the day's highscore and enter **PRO** as your name. Next time you play, well see for yourself....

Technophobia ruining your gaming life? Dr. Ashton has your cure.

When you write, remember to include as much pertinent information as possible. Send your CONFIG.SYS and AUTOEXEC.BAT and any associated *.INI files for Windows that might tell me more about your problem. Give me as detailed an explanation as you can and be sure to include as much detail as possible about your PC. Feel free to email your questions or, if you want to snail mail, please remember to write clearly or better still, print your letters. Please note that due to the volume of messages we receive, we cannot guarantee a response to your queries.

Setup
PC PowerPlay
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setup@pcpowerplay.next.com.au

BANDWIDTH BUSTERS

QI hope you can answer this question for me. Why is it that standards such as Ultra DMA/33 and Ultra Wide SCSI support speeds up to 40 megabytes a second, when even the best hard drives today don't go past something like 14 megabytes a second? I've just found out that Ultra2 SCSI is coming which can support 160 megabytes a second! What's the point in this bandwidth if drives can't go this fast?

Ralf Richards
Melbourne, VIC

AYou've got to remember that these high end standards aren't designed for your average gamer sitting at home sipping Coke and tallying up the frag count. The bandwidth of these standards represents the maximum amount of data the system can pump through a second. Server systems often have many hard drives, especially if they use RAID, and if each drive were to run at, say, 10 megs a second, what happens on an Ultra Wide

system (max 40 megs a second) when you have five drives running? You got it, suddenly the maximum bandwidth becomes too small for the throughput of the drives.

Realistically, however, even something like the Ultra Wide standard is plenty for most server systems - to reach its 40 meg a second limit you'd need many drives being accessed simultaneously and at their theoretical maximum transfer rate. Most of the time, however, with random reads and writes hard drives never reach such high throughput and are unlikely to be all accessed at once during any given second.

Still, the newer standards give room to move. Imagine if you had an Ultra2 Wide SCSI system (80 megs a second maximum bandwidth) with 8 drives running around 10 megs a second each, you could easily run all 8 of them, at full speed, simultaneously and not degrade your throughput.

But, as I said, this isn't a gamers market. Ultra Wide and Ultra2 Wide controllers and drives are great if you can afford them, because SCSI is faster than EIDE and some of the newer Ultra2 Wide drives can

LETTER OF THE MONTH: VIRUS PROTECTION

QThe recent problems with the Marburg virus highlights the importance of virus scanner and cleaner programs. My problem is choosing a 'reliable' program. PC PowerPlay has itself found out that not all scanners will cover all viruses. I was using an older version of VET but upgraded with the program on the cover CD and now it is version 9.7.0. The help feature on this version didn't even have the Marburg virus in its database so I thought I would install AntiViral Toolkit Pro (AVP) as well. This is where my problems started. After restarting Windows 95 I would get a blue screen with the message 'A fatal exception OE has occurred at 0028:4F444E49. The current application will be terminated'. This resulted in me having to reboot in 'Safe Mode' to remove AVP and then I could restart with no problem. My question is to ask if it is possible to operate multiple virus scanners on the one computer to try and cover most viruses? Your help on this problem and viruses in general would be much appreciated.

Tim Harris
Internet

Aok, this is likely to be a debatable issue with many people, but virus protection is one of the most misunderstood aspects of PC's today. So here's the 'Ashton Method' of virus protection.

First, they're overrated. Don't succumb to 'fear of the unknown' and get paranoid about viruses. Yes, there are thousands of viruses out there, but rarely will you ever get one on your system

and rarer still will you ever lose data. The first rule about protecting your machine is common sense. If you're getting a program from a stranger or an unknown source, by all means scan it, but don't go scanning every single file you receive.

Which leads me to my second point - memory resident scanners. Yuck, hate them. They suck up CPU time and slow your disk access - every file is scanned, everytime. Completely over the top and unnecessary.

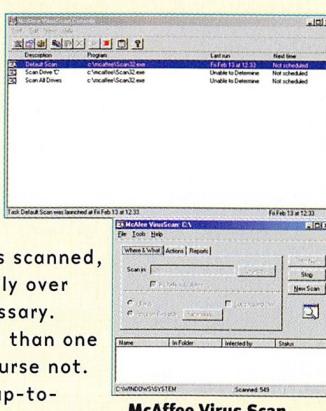
Do you need more than one virus scanner? Of course not. All you need is one up-to-date, reliable scanner you can use to scan questionable files. You don't need memory resident scanners, you don't need scanners that run everytime you boot up, and you certainly don't need whizz-bang graphical GUI's slapped on top of them. A scanner should scan and clean, and nothing else.

So which one to use? McAfee. Their modern scanners come with a fancy Windows frontend to bring in all the Windows users who fear the command line, but these scanners come in multi-megabyte archives and suck up just as much space on your disk once installed. McAfee also has memory resident scanners and boot-time scanners (they do their best to cover all bases), but that's not what I'm interested in. All you need is

what they first became famous for - their DOS command line scanner. It's small, fast, and scans for all the viruses its GUI based counterpart does. Only it's easier to use, and you run it only when you need to. It's also fully cross platform, with versions for OS/2, netware and most versions of Unix. McAfee are also always up-to-date. If your version of McAfee Scan doesn't look for a virus you know you want protection against, just go download the latest virus definition file.

That's my take. Viruses and PCs are simply common sense, the popular (and it is VERY popular) virus protection market is as hyped up as the crash protection market (crash protection software?). Shouldn't the OS not crash in the first place?) Unnecessary marketing playing off the fear factor has turned what is really a simple affair into a profitable industry.

You can download the latest DOS based McAfee Virus Scan from <ftp://ftp.mcafee.com/pub/antivirus/dos/vscan>, which is around 1M, or download its Windows based counter part from the [antivirus/win95](http://www.mcafee.com/antivirus/win95) directory, which weighs in at 5M! New virus definition files can be downloaded from the [antivirus/datfiles](http://www.mcafee.com/antivirus/datfiles) directory. Isn't all this available from the www.mcafee.com webpage? Sure is, but you'll have to fill in a registration form to get download access, something that isn't required if you just FTP in. Take note that Virus Scan is shareware, and you need to buy the product after 30 days use.



McAfee Virus Scan

transfer 14 megs a second, so even a single Ultra2 drive is worth the investment. But no, you won't find yourself sucking up all that bandwidth!

FRAMES PER WHAT?

Q Explain something to me. I read on page 32 of issue 29 that the most frames per second the human eye can see is around 30, and that all those 3D cards that can pump out much more aren't really that important because of the 30 frames per second limit. But why is it then that when I play games like Quake II at 40 frames per second that it looks much smoother than a slower system running around 30 frames?

Paul Tanner
Bondi, NSW

A Good question. Here's the deal: when you see benchmarks of 3D cards reporting that they can lay down 'X' frames a second, you're seeing an average of the frames per second of a given timed demo. The problem with an average is that it doesn't tell us what the maximum - and minimum - frame rates were. Sure, you may discover that a 3D card can display an average 35 fps over a given demo, so then why is it that when you play the game it doesn't seem so smooth? Because that 35 fps average probably includes quite a few numbers that were less than 30 - scenes where the environment, graphics or action was intense and thus requiring more CPU or 3D hardware processing power.

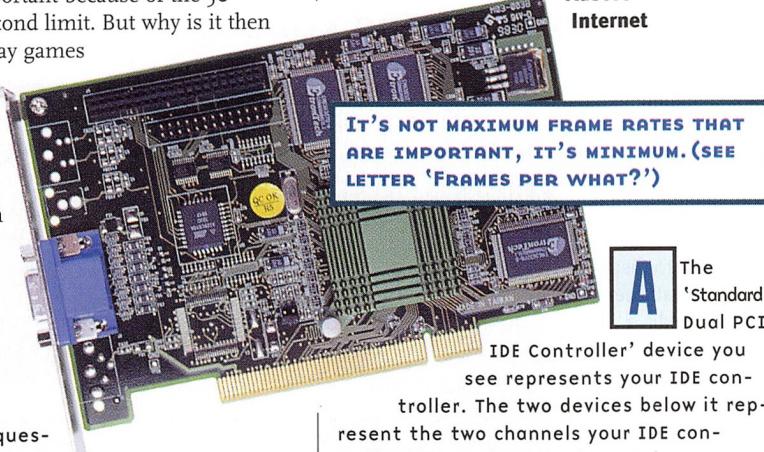
What really matters is the absolute minimum frames per second a 3D card can pump out during the most intensive 3D gaming sessions. If a card can display 30 fps or more when it's most loaded down, then you can be assured smooth gameplay no matter what comes on screen. It's the little slow downs here and there during gaming that shatters the illusion by reducing the frame rate so much that the human eye and brain picks up on it. If you want the most realistic gameplay, choose a 3D card and CPU combo that will keep you above 30 fps.

1 CONTROLLER, 2 CONTROLLER

Q Greetings' and many gratuitous compliments be to you Ashton, for such a brilliant tech section. It's more of a query than a real problem. I have a 4.1g

UltraDMA/33 hard drive (yes I only have ONE). In the Windows 95 system/device manager section under hard drive controllers, I have three listed: Primary IDE Controller, secondary IDE Controller and Standard Dual PCI IDE Controller; The Dual PCI IDE Controller seems to give the option to set the active controllers. Would your please be able to clarify why I have three and if it makes any difference only enabling one primary or secondary IDE controller. Any help would be much appreciated as there is nowhere else I can ask.

Auscot
Internet



A The 'Standard Dual PCI IDE Controller' device you see represents your IDE controller. The two devices below it represent the two channels your IDE controller has — primary and secondary. You can individually enable or disable these channels, or disable the whole controller.

It makes no difference whether the channels are enabled or disabled, unless you have devices on these channels that you want to use under Windows. There's no harm in leaving channels enabled under which you have no devices.

NETWORKED MOUSE

Q I have a normal PC and this little laptop that I hook together with a serial cable every now and then to play multi with friends, and hate the inbuilt touch pad on the laptop that I use because my friends suck at the games such as TA and Starcraft and trying to play them with the touchpad is absolute horror. What's at the back of the laptop is a circular keyboard port, a COM port, a LPT port, a monitor port, a gamespad/joystick port and some weird one that has a board like thing in the center and on the top and bottom and to either side so if you can please tell me how to hook a mouse up to something like the LPT port.

Jason Smith
Internet

A All modern laptops support the use of an external mouse, but not through the LPT port! You will find that laptops often use a PS/2 interface, a feature common on Pentium II motherboards today. The PS/2 port is round, and you'll probably find two of them (one for a PS/2 mouse, another for a PS/2 keyboard). All you have to do is plug in a PS/2 mouse and you're set. Windows will even be able to identify it and use it automatically.

Tech Tips

Submit your favourite tip. Go on, you know you want to.

CONNECT FASTER

You want to get on the Web and you want to get on fast. There's game demos to download, and best pals to frag, and you don't want to spend ages waiting to connect. Yeah, I know your type... so here's a tip or two:

Click My Computer > Dial Up Networking > Connections > Settings. De-select 'Prompt for information before dialling' and 'Don't prompt to use Dial-Up Networking'. Make sure you've previously used your ISP and correctly typed in your username and password (and clicked that 'Save password' box).

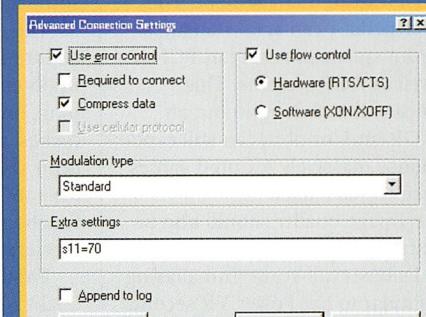
Next, click on the Properties of your ISP profile and then click Server Types. Make sure that 'Log on to network' is disabled, you don't need this and it slows you down considerably. Also, make sure only TCP/IP is enabled for 'Allowed network protocols'.

Lastly, click Configure for your modem under the General tab, followed by Connection and then Advanced. You should find yourself in the modem configuration dialog. Under 'Extra settings' add:

\$11=70

and then click Ok.

Now, next time you click on your ISP profile it won't prompt you for information, will dial out fast, and will quickly negotiate PPP once connected. If you don't see a speed improvement here, then you've probably been a bad boy this year and Santa isn't going to bring you any prezzy's.



THE \$11 REGISTER SETS HOW FAST YOUR MODEM SHOULD DIAL.
EXPERIMENT WITH THE VALUE IF YOU WISH, BUT BE AWARE THAT IF YOU DIAL TOO FAST THE EXCHANGE WON'T BE ABLE TO PICK UP THE NUMBERS.

Bleeding edge games and 3D technology

PERMEDIA 3 AND RAGE 128 GL

2nd generation 3D accelerators are maturing. Here we take a peek at the Permedia 3 and the ATI Rage 128L. It's also been a big month for 3D software as we examine some up and coming 3D engines.

Permedia 3

The Permedia 3 is due early next year and unlike the Permedia 2 which was primarily a card designed for workstations, the Permedia 3 will be heavily geared for games. Now, according to 3Dlabs, the Permedia 3 will be up to six times faster than the Permedia 2, which is particularly impressive considering that the P2 was no slouch.

The Permedia 3 looks exciting - if only because it seems quite similar to the RIVA TNT. The P3 will feature 4 to 16Mb of memory, AGP2x, a 128-bit bus, full geometry setup engine (great for slower systems, especially the PCI version), 250Mpixel/sec fill rate and extensive single-pass multitexturing support. Out of the box, the P3 will have full support for DirectX 6 and an OpenGL ICD allowing for across the board compatibility, except of course for Glide.

One of the most intriguing functions of the Permedia 3 is a novel approach it will take to virtual texture management. The Permedia 3 can access textures from system memory in PCI as well as AGP systems. This means that those without an AGP card, or port, can still experience massively textured games like an AGP user.

Image quality should also be extremely good as the Permedia 3 features full-scene anti-aliasing (similar to the Power VR second gen) and optimisation for true colour display. Plus it supports a high-resolution 32-bit Z-buffer as well as non-16-bit and 24-bit Z-buffers and an 8-bit destination alpha buffer.

In terms of 3D, the Permedia does indeed sound exciting, however its 2D is likely to pretty much blow everything else away. It will incorporate a 270MHz

RAMDAC which will handle true colour refresh rates as high as 137Hz at 1,280x1,024 and 90Hz at 1,920x1,080. That's a serious resolution which implies that Permedia aren't going to disappoint their business customer base either. The Permedia 3 will also offer hardware-assist DVD video acceleration.

There's no doubt that a card this powerful poses a serious threat to a fully optimised RIVA TNT, let alone a Voodoo 2. However, with that much power, we predict that it won't come cheaply. The price is potentially the biggest adversary Permedia will have to consumer sales.

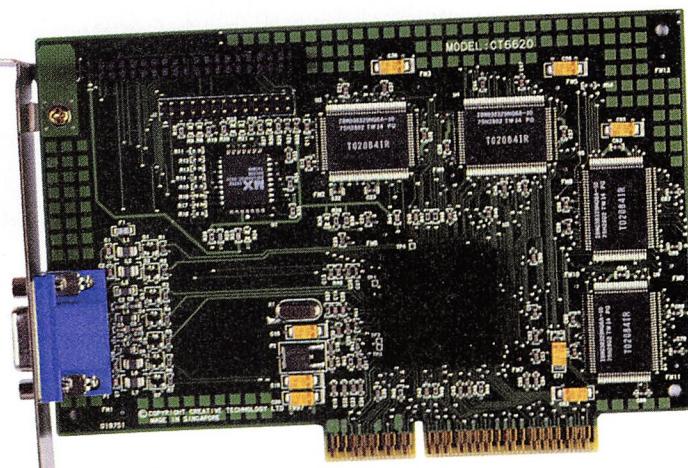
ATI

The latest chipset in the works by ATI is the 2D/3D Rage 128GL. Now, the Rage - although receiving excellent OEM inclusion (god knows why, the power of marketing I suppose), was rather a dud. The 128GL however could make up for this with some interesting new features.

The 128GL offers a standard feature set such as single pass multitexturing and bump mapping, on-chip texture and pixel caches, an 8-bit stencil and a deep 32-bit Z-buffer. However the 128GL also brings a few new functions to the world of 3D accelerators.

Firstly, it uses a superscalar dual 32-bpp rendering pipeline and the stock AGP2x implementation is boosted by bi-directional Direct Memory Execution (DME) support. There's no statistical data available for this yet, but it sure sounds impressive - expect to hear it repeated ad-nauseum by your local ATI marketing rep.

As impressive as it all sounds though, like the previous ATI product, the 128GL has not been



The Permedia 2 card wasn't an awesome piece of silicon for games, but the Permedia 3 is designed with us in mind. Clearly a good decision!

designed to actually beat anything. ATI's primary design goal has always been to offer numerous features at an affordable price.

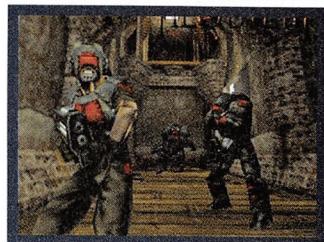
On the up side is that the 128GL has one key feature lacking from most 2D/3D solutions; an integrated hardware (NOT hardware assisted) DVD/MPEG-2 decoder. The advantage of this of course is that DVD playback on lower-end systems is quite feasible and will offer a very healthy frame rate.

ATI incarnations should occur with a 16Mb version called the Xpert 128 AGP and the 32Mb Rage Fury. With production starting in October, we can most likely expect to see these in Australia around Christmas.

group of Angels (the Chosen) who fight an opposing group of Demons (the Fallen).

Assuming the role of Malachi (an Angel), you're of the more powerful warrior caste (interestingly, the concept of angelic castes is a constant theme from the Bible). As a secret agent from beyond you'll travel the far reaches of Creation to defy the wrath of the Fallen.

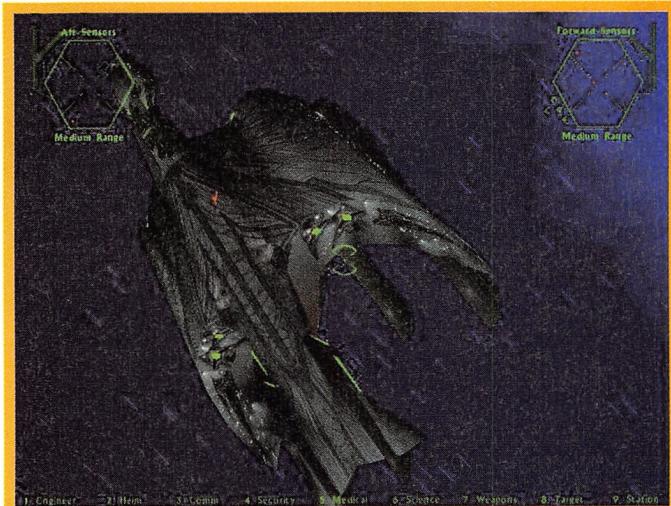
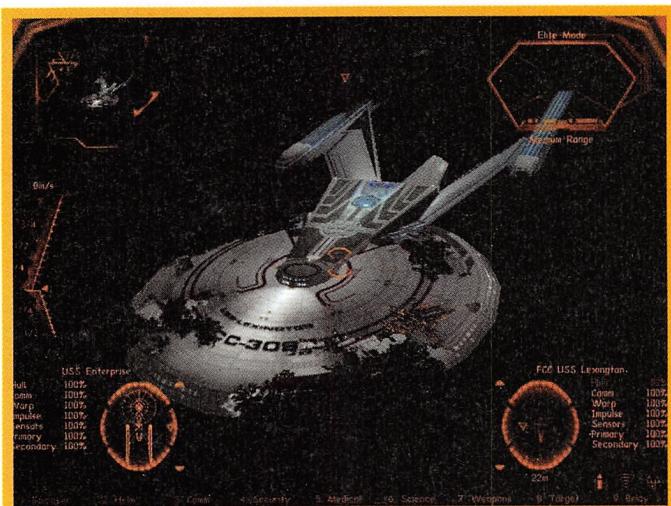
Aside from the new theme, what makes Requiem intriguing is its 3D engine. More particularly its Emotive Animation engine can create incredibly realistic



3D Tech News

Requiem

An interesting concept is starting to emerge into computer games. That of the spiritual war being fought all around us by Demons and Angels. There's Shiny's Messiah which features you as a cherub that can possess different hosts and now there's Requiem where you control a



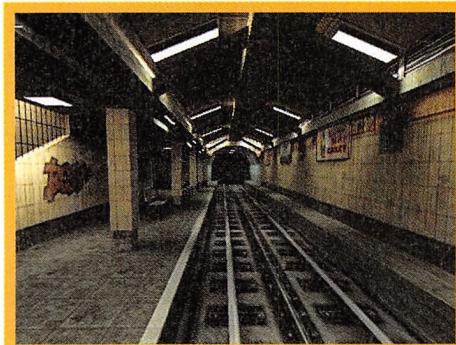
(above) Klingon Academy - like Starfleet Academy, but good

monsters and humans with flawless animation.

The engine has the ability to store hundreds of animations due to their compact size which varies between 5k to 15k each. RAMLock technology also allows it to lock down RAM in Windows 95 gaining an extra edge in frame rate. There's also particular optimisations for the Voodoo 2 and Riva TNT (making the TNT the only second gen card after the Voodoo 2 receiving specific support).

The engine also features fully accurate shadows, real-time lighting (quite an exciting concept) and skeletal animation allowing in game characters to use their hands to gesture, or beg for mercy.

Character models also smoothly transition from one animation to another. This alleviates inherent 3D problems from other



games which pop from a run to a walk with no in-between frames.

If released soon, Requiem will be one of the first games customised specifically for the Voodoo 2.

Klingon Academy

From a starship combat point of view, Starfleet Academy was extremely disappointing. The Enterprise performed like a one man fighter and pathetic expl-

SPECULAR SPOTLIGHT



WCW Nitro

Now there are probably some confessions that are best left to be made in cramped wooden booths. But I'm going to do it anyway. I'll admit it, I'm a wrestling fan! I have been for years and still get a kick out of watching steroid-abusing grown men pummel (or at least pretend to) each other repeatedly with fists, boots, and all assortment of illegal objects. (I once saw someone drag a stop sign into the square circle then belt someone around the head with it).

Imagine my amusement and even joy to hear that the PC will finally be graced with its own fully 3D wrestling game. WCW Nitro (an official license) allows you to play as any of the top WCW and NWO wrestlers, complete with their finishing moves.

A potentially impressive title, WCW Nitro doesn't just milk the wrestling license and fan base. Instead some decent work seems to have gone into it. You will be able to control and play as any of the more than 60 grapplers, each with their signature move and personalized rant. Irrespective of my bias towards wrestling, this factor alone makes it worthy of The Spotlight. How many other games offer such a wide variety of characters to play as?

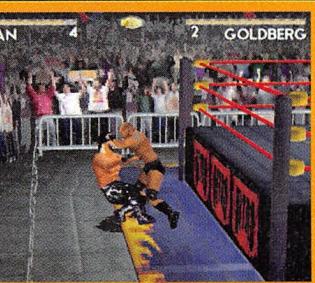
Other options include network Multi-player action over LAN, modem, and the Internet. Mmmm, Internet battle royale! If done right (i.e. not too much lag) it could be a ton of fun. Also, amusingly implemented is force feedback support so you can feel your opponent's kathump.

Whether you love or hate wrestling, WCW Nitro does look like it could be a lot of fun. Especially since we're so starved of fighting games on the PC.

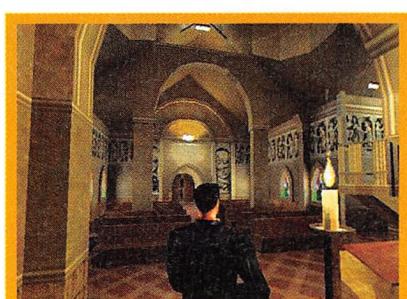
sions didn't really give anyone that kind of inspiring power a starship commander should feel.

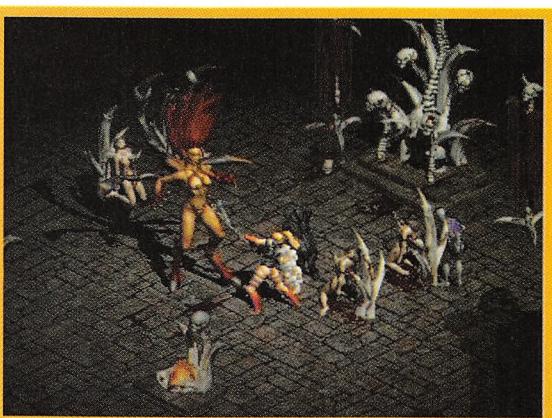
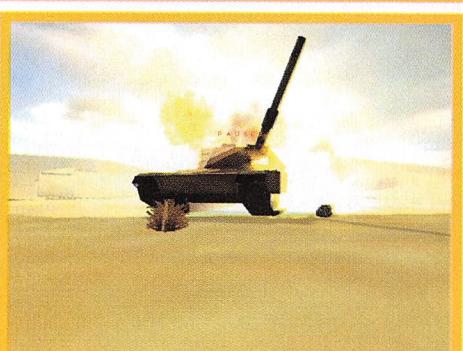
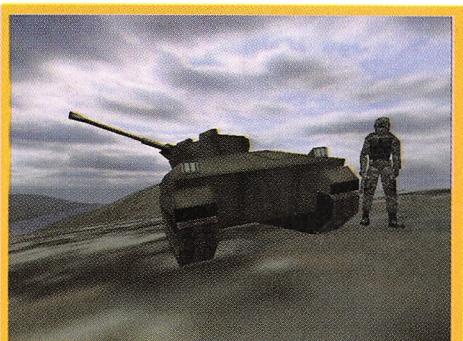
The above criticism was rife from both Trekkies and space sim enthusiasts alike, criticism that Interplay is hoping to correct in their newest piece, Klingon Academy. The promise this time round is that the focus will be on capital ship combat rather than small fighter craft combat.

What makes Klingon Academy particularly excit-



ing from a space combat sim point of view is its interactive space terrain. You will be fighting in nebula clouds and near black holes that actually effect the





(far left, top to bottom) Wargasm
(left) Diablo II
(below) Ultima Ascension

with abilities to call in airstrikes, artillery etc. There will also be 3 main types of environment, desert, temperate and mountainous, but different times of day and weather conditions will make the environments quite variable.

From a strategy point of view, resources aren't managed by collection. Instead the player will have to carefully plan each mission and take the correct type of vehicles onto the battlefield (similar to Dark Omen).

Let's step away from the game, and examine the 3D technology. Notice the vibrant colours and sharp clarity the Wargasm screenshots offer. They were taken from the game running on a Matrox G200. Image quality is indeed excellent, enough to make 3Dfx owners cringe.

Quick bytes

Diablo II and 3Dfx

Blizzards official Diablo II FAQ has been updated with information regarding the 3Dfx. Diablo II via the Glide API (3Dfx native) will offer improved transparency effects, improved lighting/shadowing effects (such as coloured lighting and smoother transitions between light and dark areas), atmospheric effects such as fog and a faster frame-rate.

for its set of texture maps.

The engine is also powerful enough to incorporate disparate 3D onto characters. For example, Max's overcoat isn't part of his body, but rather is an individually generated 3D object that moves separately from Max. Max's overcoat actually flaps behind him as he runs, dives, spins, and kicks.

The engine also features extremely advanced particle and lighting effects. In one scene Max lights a cigarette where radiosity lighting (light sources generated by objects - a technique previously reserved for expensive ray tracing software), realistically plays off the planes, curves, and contours of Max's face. Then as Max puffs, the glow of the cigarette rises and ebbs, and the engine's particle system animates the swirling, transparent smoke.

Wargasm

DID, the people responsible for the very popular EF2000, are currently working on a 3D Combat Strategy game called, ahem, Wargasm.

Wargasm like other RTS/Action conglomerates (such as Urban Assault) will allow you to control several different vehicles

Ultima Ascension

The shown Ultima Ascension screenshot is so you can see how the backpack (a concept from U7, U8 and UO) is still utilised in a 3D environment. It's also worth looking at the quality. At least in terms of graphics, UA won't disappoint.



dynamics of the battle. For example, if combat occurs near a black hole you must be extremely careful not to get too close or you'll be sucked in. Black holes will even affect energy weapons as they will bend light and alter the path of your photon torpedoes.

It will also be possible to evade rival ships by hiding behind planets. Also, skimming a gas giant such as Jupiter may give you a tactical advantage over smaller, lighter ships as they must slow down or be ripped apart by swift winds.

As a Klingon commander, you will of course be able to cloak your ship. However a most interesting feature is the ability to use your Tractor beams to tow objects such as asteroids that can be used to hurl at enemy ships.

There's also planetary bombardment and pseudo RTS options that allow for troop engagements. You can invade a star base, or after a ship's shields are disabled you can transport an away team of marines to the rival ship and overtake it while still leaving the hull intact.

Graphically (as you can see from the screenshots) Klingon

Academy is vastly superior to Starfleet Academy. 3D Artist Manny Salazar is quoted as saying "We have designed and textured our ships to match their cinematic counterparts." Let me tell you, some of the ships look better than they do in the Star Trek movies with full lighting and shadow effects.

For those that have always lusted over ship damage effects from Star Trek 2: The Wrath of Khan, Klingon Academy will feather your cap, so to speak. The destruction system allows you to take apart other ships chunk by chunk. After you disable an enemy ship's shields, your weapons rip into the exposed hull revealing the interior, which is detailed down to the individual decks. You can actually see the separate platforms.

Due Spring 99.

Max Payne

Max Payne is another in the 3rd person shooter to feature a spiffy new engine. The E2 3D engine however looks to be vastly superior than other 3rd person engines out there.

Based around a skeletal animation system, character skins are "wrapped" around each wireframe or skeleton using Remedy's proprietary editor ActorFX and assigned hand-made character animations. The engine then defines how a character's skin should reflect the movement of its bones and generates three levels of detail

If you've only experienced
QUAKE
 in single player mode you haven't really played it at all!

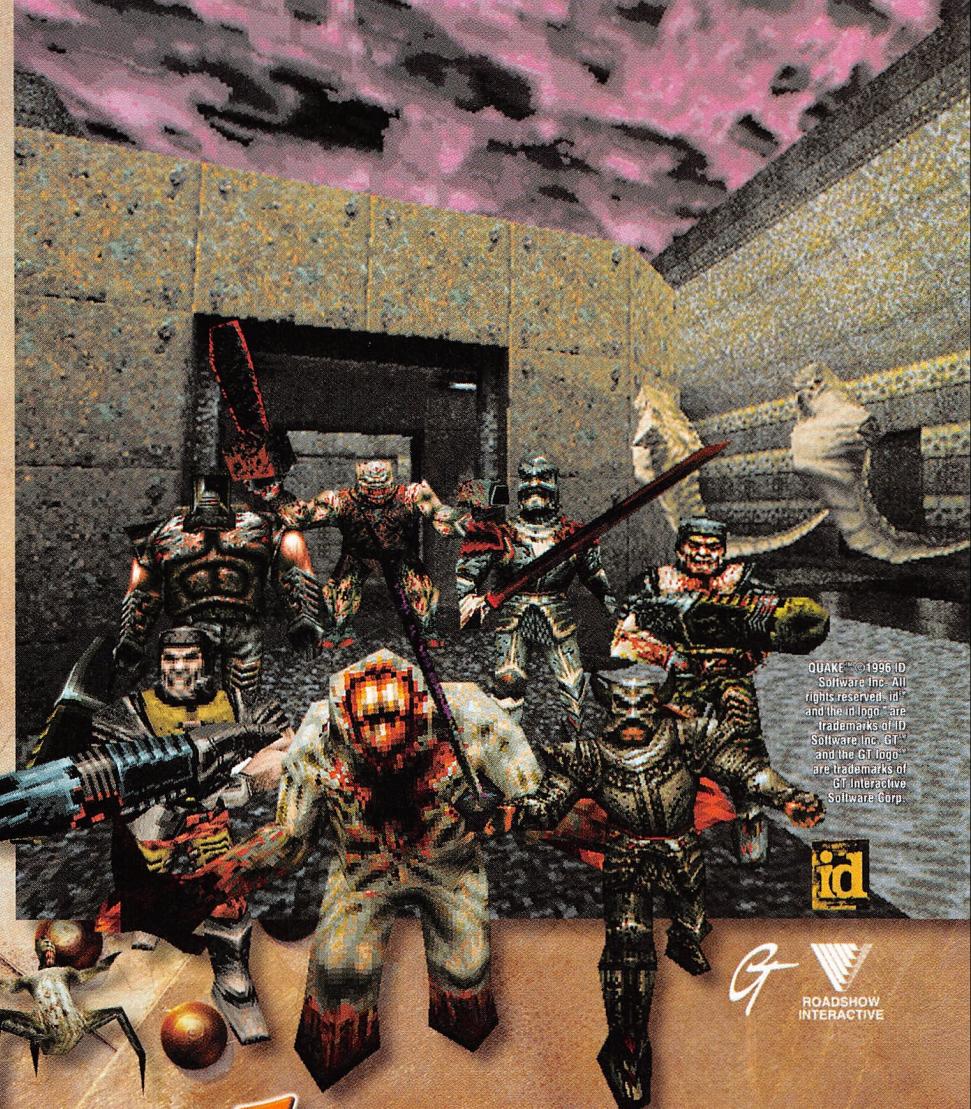
Dynalink MODEMS[®] value PACK

Dynalink Modems and Multiplay now make it possible to compete with up to 32 people online at the same time, with speeds that will blow your mind.



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Rush to your nearest dealer for details or call 1800-357-253



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Dynalink Voicedeskpro and Voicecardpro SVD Fax/Voice/Data modems now come bundled with full version of **QUAKE** and two hours free multiplayer game action with **MULTIPLAY**, Australia's dedicated games network.

This is Quake the way it was meant to be played!

Parental Warning: MA15+ High level of animated violence.
 Dynalink Modems realises that not everyone buys a modem to play games so if Quake isn't for you we have a choice of two other great bundle deals instead:



or



Net Game News

The month's digital diary

Ultima Online alive

Ultima Online seems to be coming back in vogue. Subscriptions are up, old-time users are reactivating their accounts, and Britannia seems densely populated again. Is this a direct result of UO awareness thanks to the flogging of The Second Age, or more a response to the stable and enhanced gameplay that UO has been offering of late? It could be a bit of both, but nevertheless, there are some treats in store for the many citizens of Britannia out there.

Ahh.. bless the folks of the Ultima Online development team. They endure months of bitching and moaning from their supposed fans while keeping a wonderfully complex virtual world together at the seams, and still manage to go above and beyond the call of duty. While we could easily fill half this mag detailing all of UO's minor changes, there are a couple on the way that should bring a huge smile to any self-respecting UO freak.

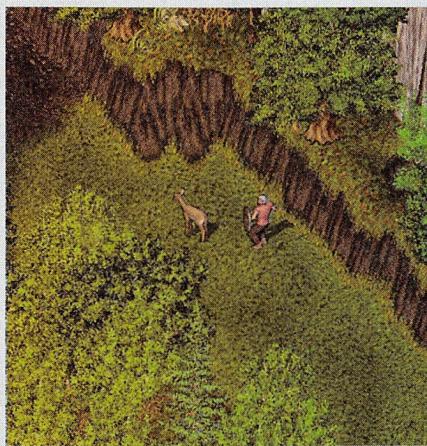
Apparently, as a Christmas present to all UO subscribers, player character races will be introduced into UO towards the end of the year. While the races have not yet been one hundred percent decided, the aim is to try to stay away from generic RPG pulp, which Origin view as irrelevant to UO. Elves and Orcs have been discussed, with the possibility of another race being used. At this stage there are no plans to change the avatar art of the new races, so it'll be impossible to tell the different races apart unless you bring up the paper doll (which will feature new art). Most importantly, new character races will have different stat mechanics. The proposed Elves will have extremely high dexterity but a low strength ceiling. So they'll be deadly with the bow or sword, but won't be able to carry much armour around. These new races should hopefully diversify a rather disappointing flock of similar characters seen in UO at the moment.

The other thing is the Big Window mode. To celebrate the first year of Ultima Online, Origin are making this Second Age only feature available to all UO players. Big Window mode features a smaller game world window and some extra space to place and arrange the many pop-up windows in the game. This is so that the world view can remain unobscured. Expect this feature in the latest patch.

Battle of the Servers

There's talk of a Quake II multiplayer match up sometime soon between the Wireplay people and the Multiplay people. If it's ever actually pulled off, it could be a truly spectacular display of cut-throat multiplayer tactics. Not only would the players be fighting for their own glory, but for the glory of their respective game service as well. The only problem would be working out which server the event should be hosted on. Er.. Anyone?

The screenshot shows the homepage of the Ultima Online: The Second Age website. At the top, there's a navigation bar with links for 'FACTS & FEATURES', 'TRAVELLER'S GUIDE', 'TOWN SQUARE', 'HELP & GUIDANCE', 'SHOPPE', and 'GUILD HALLS'. Below the navigation is a banner with the text 'ultima online the second age' and links for 'Expedition', 'Upgrade Information', 'Screen Shots', 'Second Age Features', and 'Second Age FAQ'. The main content area features the 'ULTIMA ONLINE™ THE SECOND AGE™' logo with two characters on horseback. Below the logo are five sections: 'expedition' (Read about the latest discoveries in the new land), 'features' (See the Second Age features), 'upgrade' (Find out how to upgrade and preorder), 'screens' (See game screens from the new lands), and 'FAQ' (Read the frequently asked questions).

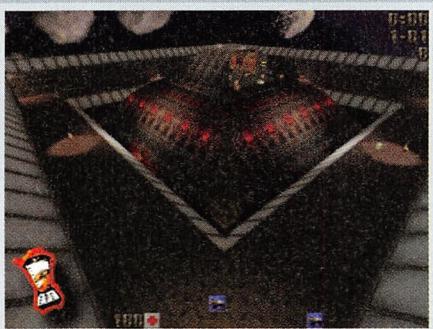


TOP MULTIPLAYER GAMES THIS MONTH:

1. Ultima Online
2. Motocross Madness
3. Starcraft
4. Quake 2
5. Jedi Knight: Dark Forces II

People seem to be flocking back to UO this month. Quake 2 and Starcraft made it into the charts yet again. And no surprises for seeing Motocross Madness enter the charts this month. We haven't had this much fun since well, the last time we played it!

To cast your vote, email ngr@pcpowerplay.next.com.au, with the subject line "favourite multiplayer game nomination".



Net News

Multiply

Multiply is now supporting Total Annihilation V3.1, as well as TA Battle Tactics. Go to <ftp://ftp.multiply.com.au/cavedog/ta1x-31c.exe> to download the necessary files.

King of the Hill

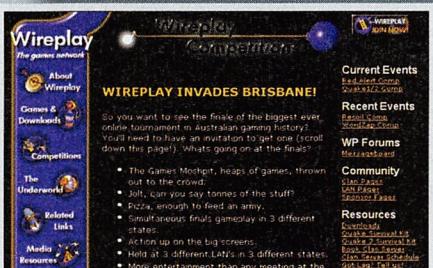
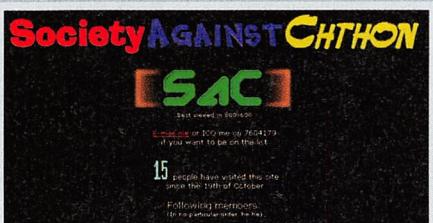
Quake II - King of the Hill (by Orange Smoothie Productions - <http://www.planetquake.com/osp/index.html>) is also now on Multiply. The idea of this mod is to be in possession of the "hill" (in the loosest sense of the term) for as long as possible. It's supposedly a bit of a favourite on Multiply at the moment, so head on over to ftp://ftp.multiply.com.au/support_files/mapsmods/koth12b_full.zip to get the necessary files.

Society Against Chthon

The Multiply player community is alive and kicking, with stacks of player web sites springing up spreading the online gaming gospel. Visit http://www.multiply.com.au/community/clan_news.html to catch up with all the goss. Most Relevant Website award goes to the Society Against Chthon page (http://members.tripod.com/~Michael_Galos/SaC.htm). A group of Quake players that have bonded over their passionate dislike of the Door to Chthon multiplayer level, so beware if you're setting up a DM game of this level.

Wireplay

It's been a fairly quiet month for both providers. The Wireplay invades Brisbane competition is still under way, with the grand final looming on the horizon. Go to <http://www.wireplay.com.au/wib/main.shtml> to try to score an invite to the event.



HOTTEST TC/MOD OF THE MONTH

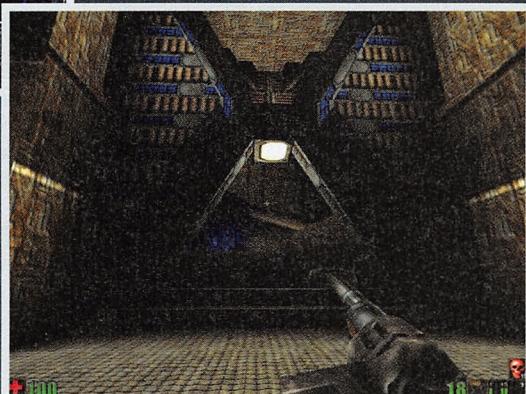
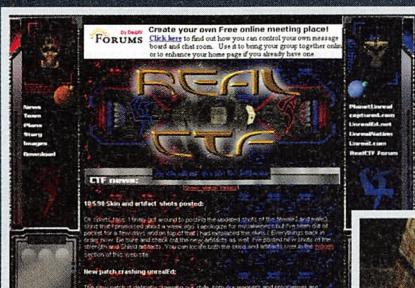
Real CTF

Developer/s: Real Productions

Game engine: Unreal

Available: End '98

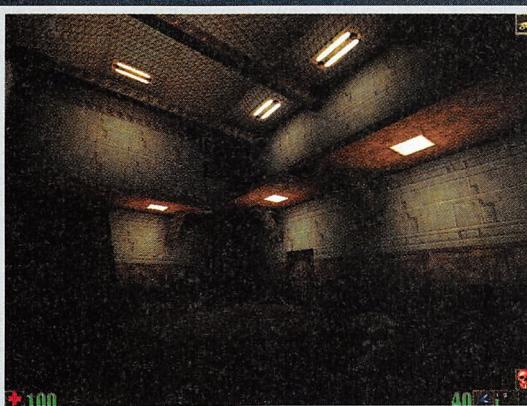
WWW: <http://www.planetunreal.com/realCTF/>



The people at Real Productions are working hard on this mega funky capture the flag MOD. There's still some way to go but already RealCTF is looking to be a stunner. An ancient story of creation and destruction serving as the game's back drop, RealCTF is going for pure simplicity over confusing player classes and the like. Here's what developer Hunglo had to say about choosing not to include player classes - "For those of you that ask 'why not player classes?' We say, why limit game play? I know that sounds strange but why would you want to limit the options of a player to doing an x amount of things when you can give them a nice set of tactical weapons and allow each player to use their own judgment, some may be wiser than others. By doing this it adds to the intensity of team play much the same way player classes do. Sometimes even more so, simply because everyone has the same options. It's just up to each individual to use them in different situations".

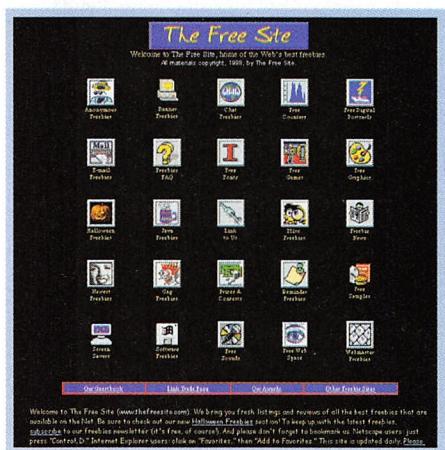
This MOD looks like being just the right thing for all those CTF/TF freaks out there disillusioned with the complex rules and rites of some TC's and MODS's doing the rounds. Pure, unadulterated CTF, and non-stop easy to understand action.

What does stand out about RealCTF though is the level design. For this reason alone RealCTF deserves mod of the month.



WEBSTALK

The web: Full of websites



THE FREE SITE

www.thefreesite.com

Free stuff on the net is not uncommon, but such a huge directory of where the best stuff is located is. This site has everything from chat programs to some very useful sites for Webmasters, which include free message boards, banner design and much, much more. Design of the site is not too bad although if you don't know exactly what category you're looking for it might take a while to find what you want. The site even has a mailing list so you don't have to keep going back to see if there is anything new. A highly useful site and one worth visiting, especially by Webmasters. (Sent by Mistery3)

Content: ★★★★☆

Site Design: ★★★★

GAMECENTER

www.gamecenter.com

For those days when you just can't wait another second to get the latest and greatest info from the next issue of this tome you're holding you could do a lot worse than to visit GameCenter. Plenty of news, reviews, hardware and even has some info on those weird

coloured boxes some people called consoles. The site also gives you new downloads every few days and will also keep you on the ball with their mailing list. Easy to navigate too. (Sent by Fram)

Content: ★★★★
Site Design: ★★★★

GABOCORP

www.gabocorp.com

This site will blow you're mind and is definitely the absolute benchmark for website design into the next century. This site is beautiful, and it takes almost no time to load. It's almost like playing a game it's so seamless and intuitive. The site content isn't a great deal for people who don't want a website professionally designed, but if you DO then you could do no better than Gabocorp. Easily the most aesthetically pleasing thing I've ever seen on the web, no doubt about it, look and see the future of website design. (Requires Shockwave)

Content: ★★★★
Site Design: ★★★★★

LOST IN UO

<http://www.burgoyne.com/pages/brentth/index.htm>

This is a fun site to visit when you've got nothing else to do. The site contains at the moment, 63 Ultima Online "Comics" which are created by grabbing a screenshot and manipulating it in some way or adding text to make it funny. Some of them are actually pretty good, some you would even class as hilarious. Presentation wise its nothing special and sticks to the general sidebar frameset idea which is tried and tested and thus it doesn't lose any marks for that but doesn't really gain any either. What it does get though is the thumbs up if you're sick of visiting the same old sites and you're after something a bit different. (Sent by Kharne)

Content: ★★★★
Site Design: ★★★★

SELF DISCOVERY WORKSHOP

www.iqtest.com

Hmmm, how smart are you? There are heaps of crap IQ tests floating around the net claiming to be "exact replicas of the professional tests." Why did we include

welcome to gabocorp.com

due to the enormous acceptance we have received from the public, we are not accepting any new projects until further notice. thank you very much for all the letters and inquiries. we promise the things to come will be even better.

gabo

next →

this one then? Because it's A: Actually fun to do. And B: Its realistic and actually gives you a fair idea of how smart you are, and even offers a full breakdown of what you did, how and why? All from 34 questions. It feels much less like a gimmick than most tests and you can tell your parents that you're "Furthering your education" using the Internet, they'll probably buy it.

Content: ★★★★
Site Design: ★★★★

LETTERS

Write to PC PowerPlay
LETTERS
78 Renwick St.
REDFERN, NSW 2016
letters@pcpowerplay.next.com.au

Cheap vs. Good

Great magazine at low, low prices. Also comes with free insults to consoles users. In reply to "console consolation" (July 98). This letter really warmed the cockles of my heart. The graphics on a N64 are unparalleled and in most cases will tread on a PC's lofty price tag. Sweet games with sweet graphics. If you like paying \$1500 to \$2500 for YOUR metal hunka general protection faults then go ahead. Oh, enjoy your "not enough memory" and all those lovely taunts you get from your computer, because unlike its PC counterpart, a N64 is actually nice to me. No error messages, no waiting, no freezes, no nothing. Just quality gaming. I DARE you to play Turok on a N64 for an hour and I bet you won't get to sleep. No, you will be dreaming about chasing after a dinosaur trying to slice its neck open and watch it quiver and spasm on the ground. Yes, PC users that's what you could have, sounds good eh? Well come over to the "Dark Side" of gaming and play a injection moulded toilet for a while. I guarantee a quality gaming experience with no smart mouthed computer retorting comments at you. Shame on you PCPP! You should be more open minded and not so open walleted.

Yours sincerely

Ucinc sect
Internet

We've consciously tried to avoid the console vs. PC debate, but hey - we do make the occasional infantile comment re. consoles, so who's to blame but us?

PC's are better and faster and more versatile, consoles are cheap and convenient. Both are great fun. There.

Reality gaming

Oh, I say what a mighty fine mag you guys produce. It's unquestionably the best magazine for the PC I have ever seen. I had only recently found this mag while visiting a friend's house. After a couple of pages of issue 27, I found myself totally bewitched by the immense beauty of the mag. This all came to crash when I read that Mr Evan Clarke had been dissing Postal, he

stated, quote: "What a pathetic game." End quote. Is he a moron or what? Who does he think he is? I'd like to see him try to make a game as good as Postal. In his letter he also stated that after killing his first citizen he had passed judgement of the game. Evan probably took at least 20 goes just to kill the first guy and then died again. It sounds to me that he may have been playing with his own joystick rather than the computers. Postal has the best storyline I reckon. Just think, what's better than getting revenge on stuck up citizens who don't feel pity for a postal worker trying to do his job. I myself know what it's like, I deliver pamphlets. When I am out on the run I give it the best I've got but most people either tell me to #!@* off with that junk, or they take it off me and toss it in the bin. So no one has the right to say that the story relates to nothing. In Evan's case, Postal leaves a bloody trail behind in the wake of Quake 2. Sure, I can relate to people not liking a game for a good reason, but not deros like Evan who pass judgement over a game just after killing one guy. I really think Evan is a desperate soul in search of a realistic mind. SEEK HELP EVAN A.S.A.P. I like to think of Postal as being the basis of gaming quality.

MUZZ AND JOELO
Internet

Kids play too!

I'm writing about all the negative comments that have been made about the young gamers of today. Sure there are a lot of losers in the 12-18 bracket that aspire to cheating and pk'ing but there are also plenty above that age. It really is offending to see that young gamers are always given stick when it comes to pk'ing and the like. Would everyone please just give young gamers a break.

A Clement
Internet

LAN living

I am writing to thank you for your article on Do it yourself LAN parties in Issue #27. I loved this

LETTER OF THE MONTH

Racism in Games

I have noticed over the years that when I play a top game e.g. Age of Empires, Starcraft or any other game, I notice that when you create a soldier, unit, etc. they are mostly white. My point to Age of Empires is that not all ancient civilisations were white.

In the game, you can choose what civilisation you want to be and if I chose the Chosen or the Egyptians and others they would not be white. The Chosen would be Asians and the Egyptians would be dark skinned because they lived and still do in a massive desert. Now to Starcraft. First of all, the Terrans would not all be Americans. I am sure since earth is colliding with two other alien races in this game, I would expect to see coloured marines, firebat's and other unit's, also added with different accent's instead of just bloody American ones. No offense.

Now to a positive note. Seven Kingdoms. At least in this game there is a bit of colour. My point about Seven Kingdoms is that it is perfect in gameplay, and in nationality. In it there are the Vikings, Chinese, Japanese, Normans etc.. all complete with their accents and national dress. It is very pleasing to see a Japanese soldier or builder in their national clothing and listen to them say "Hai Shogun" (Pronounced: Hi Shogun) or something from their language when you tell them to move somewhere on the map. I hope you people out there do not put me down, but think about what I have said and to agree or disagree? What do you think PCPP? Can you see what I'm getting at? Details do matter.

Richard Munro
Internet

Computer games are supposed to be about escaping from the ugliness and pressures of the real world. I'd like to say you're reading too much into these games - but you have made a good point. I'm sure that in almost every case the racial stereotyping is not intentional, but let's just hope that evil isn't at work, and that bloody-minded developers aren't using the perfect world that is gaming to further their warped ways.



Seven Kingdoms (see Letter of the Month)

because I have only ever played 2-player multiplayer. The only way I have to play is by modem or serial cable. My parents are paranoid about signing up for anything on the Internet, so this ruled out any games there. Once I read your article about 5 or 6 times I rang up a few friends to see if they were interested. Four of them said

yes and we bought all the junk that we needed. We finally had the party 2 months later because we weren't allowed to do it in the school term. Everyone arrived at about 9am and after about 2 hours of stuffing around trying to get everything to work, we played until 2am. We got about 4 hours sleep then played again until

Jedi Knight lightsaber duel (see letter LAN Living)

4pm, when I had to go to swimming training. It was absolutely fantastic! We played Quake, Quake2, Duke3D, Shadow Warrior, Sin, Red Alert, Theme Hospital, Jedi Knight, X-Wing vs TIE Fighter, Total Annihilation and 10 min of Dune 2000 (it ran so slowly we gave up). Jedi Knight was probably the most played, trying to dodge four people with lightsabers is hard and it's amazing how quickly you run out of Force. Anyway, thanks a whole bunch. We plan to do this every holiday now.

David Bissell
Lesmurdie WA

Clone wars

I'm sick of how people complain about clones of games. I mean, if no one cloned anything then we wouldn't have Quake 1 or 2, Unreal, Warcraft 2, Starcraft or C&C 2 would we? Nowadays, it seems that you have to at least base your style of game on another. It works like that when people write music and art. They get inspired. BUT, there are some companies out there that try to make a quick buck by creating a crap game of a genre that seems to be popular, which isn't liked by anyone. I'm just saying that people shouldn't nag about cloned games. They're there and they'll always be there. Get over it! That's one of the reasons why mags like PC PowerPlay get published: to inform you about how good (or bad) certain games are. Well that's my 2 cents.

Michael Galos
Internet

Bog standard

In this cold, cruel world, I love only three things: CTF on Quake 2, your mag, and my little dog 'Bog'.

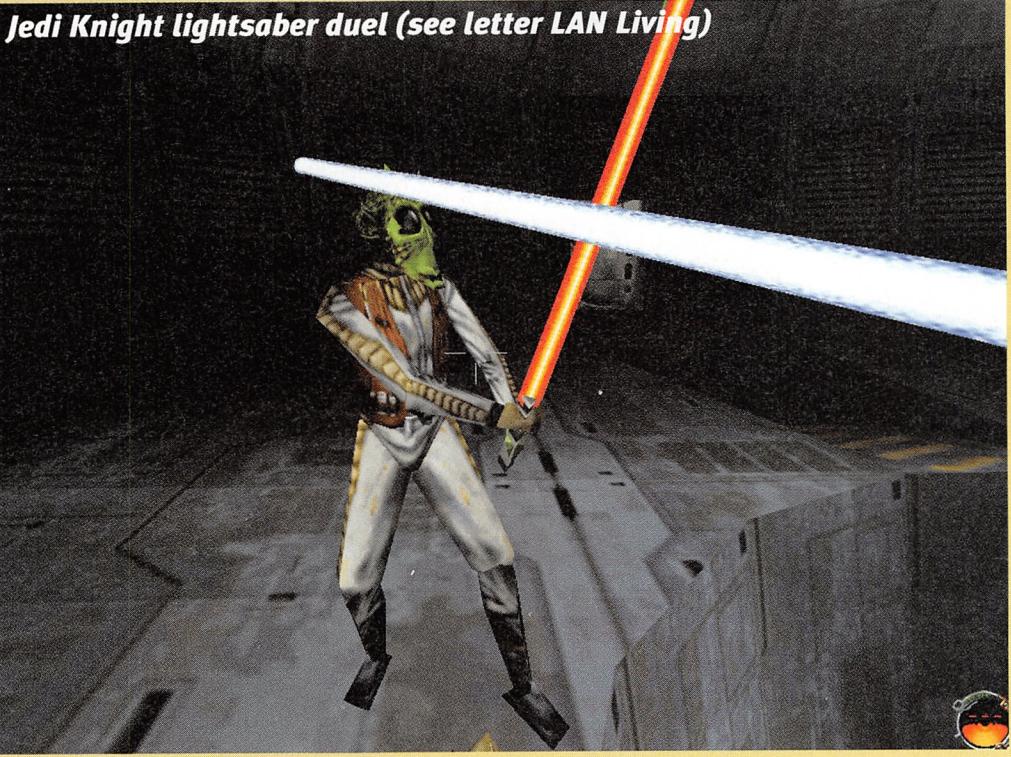
John Hirst
Darwin

The Evil Upgrade

Woe is us, oh how woe is so ever present in this hour of little gaming. Yes I am writing on behalf of multitudes of teenagers around the world who have fallen in combat to a hideous, devilish fiend. Even the evil of its name makes men shudder, it is 'The Eternal Upgrade.' It all started just as Intel were completing their Slot 1 board

design for the PII. The mainboard on my family's (or rather mine and my brothers) computer became a deep fried delicacy as somehow it shorted and decided to take many of the components with it. As we needed it quite urgently, we were forced to upgrade, so we chose the best we could afford, which was promised games would fly on at the time, a P200MMX. Within a few months, you could almost hear the latest games laughing and whispering as we attempted to run them. Now it's only good for a small percentage of games, like the non 3D RTS genre ala Starcraft. When it gets to 3D games that's where the buck stops; and most RTS's are kicking the lovely sprites and going 3D. For kids in families who have many financial commitments other than the computer, there is no way that they can keep upgrading their systems to keep up with games every time Intel decide to go to the toilet and release a new piece of hardware. Also, the new generation of 3Dfx cards price wise for many are a poor joke. You might as well put down a deposit for a Lamborghini. But alas, better hardware means better games. There is nothing that can be done. I hope one day the micron size for CPU's will stop decreasing, but I'm sure they'll find some way to keep making lots of money, I mean hardware. But I would like to thank PC PowerPlay for such a non-biased view of the PC users out there when they review games.

TheNotSoGrandInquisitor
Internet

**Gaming is killing me!**

Things are becoming too technical and moving too fast. Aren't Windows 95 and 98 supposed to make computing easy and quick? Compared to Windows 3.1 it takes longer and has extreme detail (some people might like things that are detailed but for others it confuses the hell out of them). What about Pentiums and 3Dfx cards, it's a Pentium 450 and Voodoo 2 3Dfx card one day and a Pentium 600 and Voodoo 4 3Dfx card a week later. I don't have anything against Pentiums and 3Dfx cards, they do make games look and feel more realistic but nobody will be able to keep up with it. Games requirements will be changing so quick that your computer will have to be upgraded every month; some people like myself cannot afford it and will have to miss out on those games that require thousands of dollars of hardware to run.

I'm basically saying things are changing too quick. Some people might not agree, but think about all the money that you will have to spend on faster Pentiums, modems, 3Dfx cards and more RAM.

Nathan Turnbull
Internet

It's getting a bit silly...

In response to Nikola's letter in issue #29 (the Innovation Letter of the Month), I have my own opinion over the single-player/multi-player battle. Some people say that single-player (for e.g. Quake) is only a training ground for the big thing,

multi-player. While single-player isn't as much of a challenge, I think that it is the only form of gaming that involves a story line - think about it. I mean, where's the story line in multiplayer? "Once upon a time, there was a happy little soldier prancing up and down the corridor, (DM6) holding his happy little pea-shooter and grass cutter. Then, one day, an eeeeeeevil man from the planet camp-me-good absolutely obliterated him with a rocket - he then proceeded to harvest "juice" from all the other happy prancing soldiers and claimed level domination. And the evil man lived happily ever after."

Story, huh? In my opinion, all single-player games have the element of a storyline, or an attempted one, but comparing a style of game with a storyline and one without a storyline is like comparing Eric Cartman to Michael Jordan. With a storyline, the emphasis is on the story, like what is going on, what is going to happen next, and basically aims to immerse you in its wonderful, involving environment.

Multiplayer, on the other hand, encourages you to blow your friend's/friends' head(s) off. Works, but they can't be compared. In Nikola's third paragraph, she again compares multiplayer to single player, saying that (quote) "I think it is easier to make multi-player games compared to single player." WELL DUH! As above, a multi-player game doesn't need a storyline. Single player is a totally different style, and requires a lot more thought and insight to fully



Ultima: Ascension (see letter Advancement doesn't destroy)



appreciate its goal - mood, lighting effects, the story itself, etc. For multiplayer, all designers need to think about is "add weapon here, ammo there, done."

**Thedge
NSW**

Hackers must die

Hackers! I read an article in your mag about hackers taking over Fighter Ace. Well I am also hooked up to the Internet Gaming Zone and I think it is great but I play Dark Forces 2: Jedi Knight and these stupid hackers enter my games. One guy turned himself into a Tie Bomber and we couldn't kill him. I asked where he got it from and he

replied "I wouldn't tell you in a million years". Well then I tried to kick him out but he has funny symbols that don't register on my keyboard! Another time it happened was fairly recently when this guy started shooting concussion bullets as fast as an Imperial repeater gun. Then he turned me into a column and made me fly which then I couldn't control myself. Then I asked where he got it from and he told me this address which lead to nowhere (I think I misspelt something). Anyway... what is The Microsoft Network going to do about these "people" because they are really destroying our spare time.

**Graeme Potts
Internet**

to gamble from the comfort of your own home is music to my fingertips.

There have been Casino computer games around for years with detailed instructions and tips on how to play any number of games. But it must be said, the excitement of the Casino and all forms of gambling is the risk. Where is the risk in these games? I'm sure this is why we will never see Hoyle's Black Jack or any similar titles ever make the Top 10 list.

Online gambling now puts risk into these otherwise dull, some would say, boring and pointless games. Risk = Excitement!

The one thing holding me back from having a good online bet every now and then is the security issue.

There must be countless Virtual Casino sites out there that would be being operated by people that are, shall we say, less than honest.

**Rosco
Internet**

Advancement doesn't destroy

I read with interest your article in the October State of Play regarding the upcoming Ultima: Ascension, and it has led me to point out the sad phobia that classic series seem to be plagued with. It seems to be commonly accepted that just because a game advances in technology, the wonderful elements of the founding title will be abandoned. Question: Doom was wonderful, for its day, but aren't we glad id still decided to make Quake II, instead of worrying whether they would offend a legion of fans?

Richard Garriot, Ultima's creator has recently been bombarded with hate mail and letter bombs from Ultima fans, for the simple reason that they feel Garriot has strayed too far from the original RPG roots of the game. The truth is, it has to be beneficial to be in a fully immersive 3D world, rather than 2D sprites in 200 x 200 resolution and the clink of swords sounding like two forks banging together, no matter how fun it used to be. I certainly won't be kicking down displays of Red Alert: Tiberian Sun, just because I spent hours of classic enjoyment with the original. I'm all for the reminiscing of the classics, but surely that doesn't mean current game development has to stand still, just so their memory won't be lost. The improvement of classic series is not only inevitable, but very much welcomed. The place where we have to draw the line is when the developers start to use that harrowing phrase 'we tried to suit it to a mass market.' That kind of thing never ends up being an advancement, it ends up being a cash in. But from Garriot's roots in the Ultima phenomenon and his love of the series itself, I don't see how anyone could be all that worried.

My congrats to David Wildgoose for not jumping on the mud slinging band wagon. Can't we now get back to beating on Mr Gates? It was a helluva lot more fun.

**Nick Berry
Sanctuary Cove**

COMPETITIONS



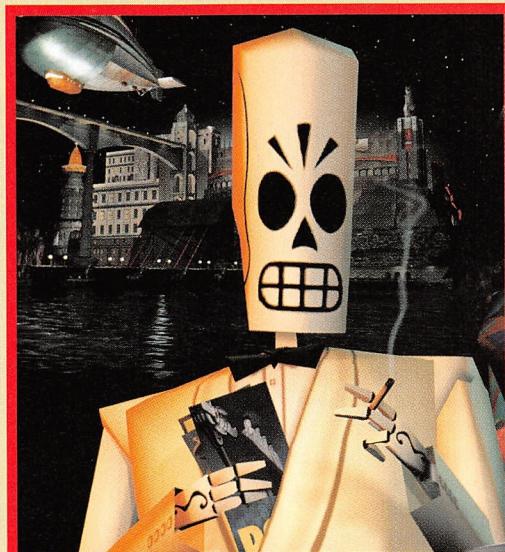
WHAT A GAME! We're kind of excited about Half Life. It's got the gameplay, the graphics and that certain special gaming magic that sucks you in helplessly. You want some. Thanks to the charming, stylish and attractive folks at Wolf Interactive, we've got 6 copies of this wondrous game to give away. Tops huh?

Q. What is the half life of Plutonium?

EUROPEAN AIR WAR

Tis the season to be a simmer. Flight Sims, that is. From MicroProse comes European Air War; it's the greatest WWII sim for the PC ever. It's been quite a while between good flight sims, and trust the masters MicroProse to come through, just like we knew they would. Thanks to the rich love that exists between MicroProse and PC PowerPlay, there are 6 copies of European Air War to win.

Q. Which British scientist invented the dam busting bouncing bomb?



GRIM FANDANGO

The kings of the Adventure game deliver their finest effort yet. Grim Fandango will revitalise the genre and save us all from the boring mediocrity of late. Gotta be grateful for that!

None of this would be possible without the generosity of the lovely lady formerly known as Miss Chambers at Metro Games.

Q. How does everybody die? (Regardless of the circumstances, everyone dies for the same reason).

WHERE TO SEND

Write the answer, along with your name and address on the back of an envelope.

All entries close December 23, 1998

Entries to:

PC PowerPlay,
78 Renwick st.
Redfern NSW 2016

Issue # 28 winners

MECH COMMANDER

Answer: Heather Locklear
C.Rogers, Novar Gardens SA
S.Pratesi, Boronia Vic
R.Liberali, Aberfoyle Park SA
M.Ielosi, Plympton SA
J.Pale, Airport West Vic
C.Coates, Newtown Tas

SWAT 2

Answer: Special Weapons And Tactics
R.Giovinazzo, Ringwood Vic
R.E. & C.M. Smith, Epping NSW
W.Tsang, St Kilda Vic
J.Bramley, Willaston SA
D.Evans, Wallsend NSW
D.Bell, York WA

SOUTH PARK

Answer: Primus
G.McGillivray, North Adelaide SA
D.Mathew, Frankston Vic
J.Timm, Avalon NSW
R.Love, Mornington Vic
J.Ho, Mandurah WA

MR. DO!

A legendary game from back in the day when a 20c coin was all you needed for a good time

Developer: Taito

Year: 1983

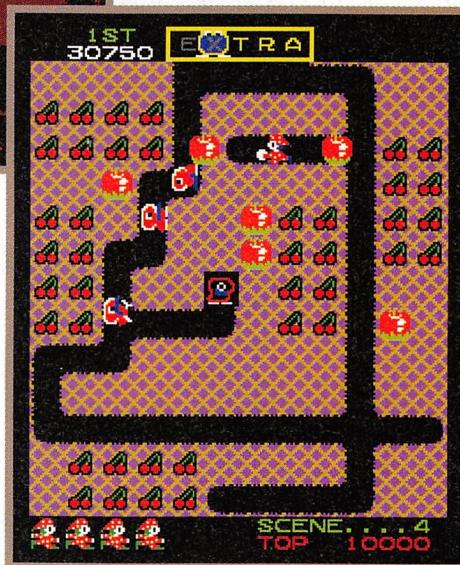
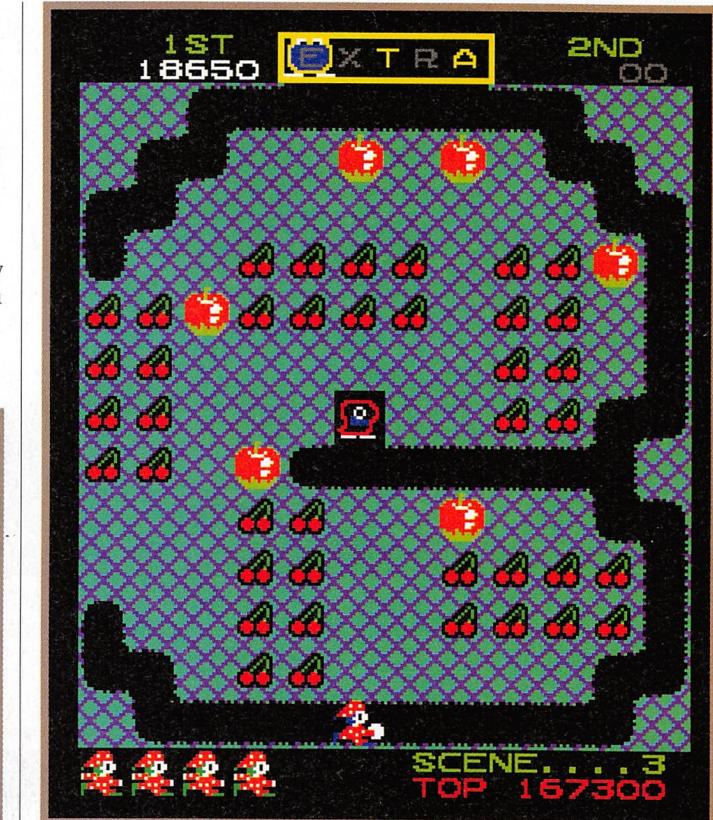
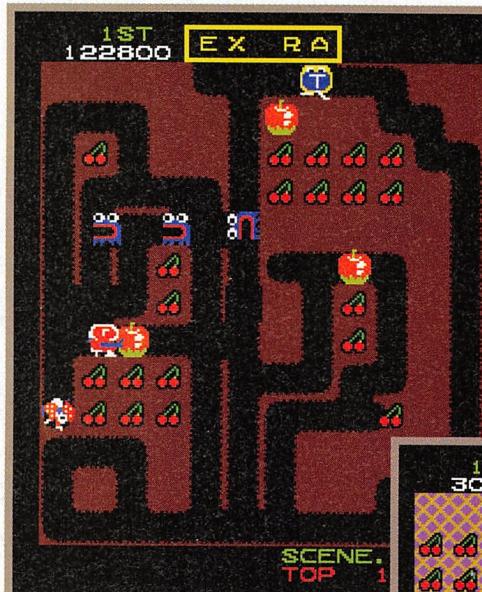
Pushing apples around may not be your idea of a good time, but it's the premise for Mr Do!, a game which graced the arcade circuits when Bill Gates had just started tinkering with his Commodore 64. It's basically a combination of the popular arcade classics like Dig Dug, Pacman, and pinball all rolled into one with some added features. You start off as Mr Do!, a clown trying to harvest an orchard of cherries and apples within a hostile environment.

The goal is simple - collect all the cherries or eliminate all the redbuck nasties that habitat the screen. Just like in Dig Dug, you move around the screen following a set path, or digging your own through the soft terrain. At your disposal is a cute orange power-ball which moves erratically down any path it finds when thrown. If the ball comes in contact with any living thing - "kaboom", instant redbuck kebab. It's not a good idea to rely heavily on your ball because each time it's used you have to wait a few seconds for it to be returned, and the more times it's used the longer you have to wait for your ball to reappear.

To compensate, apples are scattered around the screen, and are the most effective way to destroy your enemy. Line an apple up over a path and wait for them to gather below, then simply push the apple and watch it fall. Depending on your

timing it's possible to wipe out a whole tribe of nasties with just one apple.

Another way to complete a level is to eat all 40 cherries, divided into five groups of eight on the screen - and eating all eight cherries in a group without pausing awards you 500 points. Every so often, especially after a multiple kill or when you least expect it, a creature carrying one of the letters of the word EXTRA runs around the



screen. If you can kill it in time you get to keep the letter it was carrying. Kill enough of these critters to spell EXTRA and you are rewarded with a free Mr Do!.

To make things interesting, a food piece appears after all the enemies have entered the playfield. Food is a good source of points and as you progress further throughout the game the value increases. Collecting the food bounty, however, does have its price. All nasties on the screen freeze and our pal EXTRA returns accompanied by some heavy reinforcements. These reinforce-

ments have only one thing on their mind and that's hunting you down quickly, and if you think apples will protect you, think again. These guys love apples...

The pace of the game is fast and furious and it's hard to establish any real patterns. Back then, what games lacked in

Ah, the good old days, when nobody wondered why a clown dressed as a sleepy magician would want to eat cherries and push apples on monsters

graphics they made up in gameplay, and Mr Do! contains plenty of gameplay that never grows old or tiresome. The further you progress the quicker the creatures move. It's a constant mindgame and if you slip up you will pay dearly for it.

Mr Do! went on to spawn several sequels such as Mr Do!'s Castle and Mr Do!'s Wild Ride. None of them went on to reach the same heights as the original but they were fun nevertheless. Mr. Do! was a classic arcade game for its time, and now it can be played on modern computers thanks to a terrific arcade emulator called MAME (Multiple Arcade Machine Emulator). Mr Do!, although simple in concept, was and still is one of the most playable and enjoyable games around.

Harry Maragos

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